

A GARLAND OF POETRY.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

It is the "month of roses." The soft south wind comes in at our open casement, fragrant with the perfume of bursting buds and ripening flowers. The sky is without a cloud. The murmur of a pebbly brook rises and falls on our ear; the old woods rustle pleasantly to the passing breeze; and all Nature appears intoxicated with the beauty and balm of "the summer time."

Here we have been the long afternoon through, reading pleasant books and listening to the sweet sounds without. Life has been, for that brief season, a "dream of poetry." The drowsy hum of bees in the garden, the low of the distant kine, the horn of the boatman echoing among the hills, and the voice of a young girl singing among the roses, have by turns lulled us to delicious reverie and awakened us to keenest enjoyment. Earth affords no emotions more pleasurable than those of an afternoon like this, unless it may be those of an evening such as promises to succeed it. Already, indeed, the silver moon shines in the orient, though the western sky is still flushed with the sunset. Soon, without a rival, the maiden planet, will ride the heavens triumphant, field, wood and stream shining, under her fairy beams, like some land of sweet enchantment. There, even as we write, the last ruddy tint has faded from the west; and a flood of silver moonlight pours in at our window. It is an hour for poetry. It is a season for high and holy thoughts. The soul pants to be free, up among those bright worlds, searching the unfathomable mysteries of space. Let us yield to the influences around us.

We have been reading a volume of poems, written by Mrs. E. H. Evans; and we cannot do better, dear reader, than rehearse them to you. But who, you ask, is Mrs. Evans? We answer, she is a woman of real genius, and has evidently drunk, from inspiration, at the true Pierian spring. But the distinctive beauty of her poetry, and what exalts it above that written generally even by her sex, is its Christian, if not saint-like aspirations after a better and holier world. She seems to feel that genius has been bestowed on her for a sacred purpose, and that, both as a woman and a poet, it becomes her to sing principally of "Shiloh's fount," and of that immortal river which Milton, in a divine frenzy, saw flowing, between perennial banks, "fast by the oracle of God." All her loftier flights of inspiration are dictated by devotional feelings.

When her eye is fixed on supernal things, when her soul is filled with holy longings, she soars upward, on untiring wing, like a lark exulting heavenward. We do not know that we can better explain this intense aspiration after supernal things, than by quoting one of her poems, perhaps the most beautiful of its kind ever penned by an American female.

THE LAND FAR AWAY.

There are bright homes 'mid bowers of deathless glory—

There are blue skies o'er-bending them in love;
Sweet winds, that never sighed round ruins hoary,
Or sung the autumn requiem of the grove.
There are fair flowers, by crystal waters springing,
That never bore the semblance of decay;
On the soft air their perfumed incense flinging,
In a land far away.

There, on the mountain tops, the day, declining,
Hath never caused a twilight shade to rest:
Each height with a pure, lambent splendor shining,
Sunlike in brightness o'er the valleys blest.
And there are dwellers in those scenes of gladness,
O'er whose pure being Death can have no sway;
Whose voices utter not a note of sadness,
In a land far away.

Cherub and seraphim of glory, bending
In holy raptures at a throne of light:
Angels and saints their songs of triumph blending—
These are the dwellers in those regions bright;
And some have walked with us the path of sorrow,
And felt the storms of many a wintry day;
But oh! they wakened to a glorious morrow,
In the land far away.

And shall we weep for those to joy departed?
Or should we mourn that they shall grieve no more?
Sick as we are, and sad, and weary-hearted,
Should we recall them from that blessed shore?
See, where they dwell! the forms we loved and
cherished,

(From age, dim-eyed, with hair of silver grey,
To the fair babe, that like a blossom perished,)
In the land far away.

Thou, best and dearest, ever-gentle mother!
Who soothed me in thy tender arms to rest—
Still the cries that would have vexed another,
By folding me with love upon thy breast,
Green o'er thy grave, for years, the long grass, sighing,
Hath seemed to mourn above the mouldering clay;
But well I know thy spirit dwells, undying,
In a land far away.

And He, whose brightness suns and stars are veiling,
Whose form, once seen, would blind our mortal eyes,
With Him, who bore unmoved the scoffers railing,
And died to give us entrance to the skies:
Father and Son, and ever-blessed Spirit,
There, by their presence, make eternal day!
Oh! glorious are the homes the good inherit,
In the land far away.

In a more solemn strain, but still dictated
by the same religious feeling, are the following

verses. They recall the great truth, too often forgotten or neglected, that this life is but a prelude to another.

WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

We might have been! Oh, words of deepest sorrow,
When uttered in the realms of endless gloom;
Where no sweet hope, with promise of to-morrow,
Comes with its bird-like song, or flowery bloom.

We might have been beside cool streams reclining,
That gain new glory from our raiment white!
And these pale brows, where dark despair sits pining,
Cast a far radiance 'neath their crowns of light.

We might have been with those, the loved and cherished,
Whose presence made our earthly homes so fair;
Whose happy spirits, when their shrines had perished,
Spread their glad wings at once for purer air.

We might have been there where our gentle mothers
And bright-haired sisters walk—a lovely band!
Where even the voices of our infant brothers
Float on each zephyr of the blessed land.

We might have been there with the great and holy
Patriarchs and prophets of each age and clime,
Who, soaring up from thrones, or dwellings lowly,
Priests, kings, and conquerors reign in pomp sublime.

We might have been!—Oh! God forbid that ever
Writer or reader with such woe shall thrill!
Nay, let us upward press with strong endeavor,
And so life's glorious destiny fulfil.

In themes of daily interest Mrs. Evans also excels. The ensuing lines, which have been frequently published, are perhaps familiar to our readers; but they are so beautiful, in every way, that we cannot resist quoting them.

CONSUMPTION.

All through the dreary Winter months

We nursed her lovely form,
And trembled at the slightest gale,
Or threatening of a storm.

How solemnly we guarded her,
How tearfully caressed,
And oh! with what an anxious gaze
We watched her troubled rest!

And when the searching winds of March,
Swept by with moaning sound,
How still became our hearts with fear,
How pale each face around.

And eagerly, yet half afraid,
We marked the slightest change,
And fancied in her tones of love,
A cadence sadly strange.

We could not bear to see her fade,
To note her failing voice,

E'en though its murmured melody,
Still faltered out—Rejoice!
Her eyes looked larger than of yore,
Her brow more purely white;
And oh! we shuddered when she held
Her hand against the light.

That hand was tremulous and thin,
Yet oft, when tears we shed,
She pressed it tenderly in turn
Upon each drooping head!
Oh, she was lovelier every hour,
And dearer every day,
And made our lowly home a place
For Angel guests to stay!

But Winter storms at length were gone,
The flowers began to bloom,
And as she stronger grew, a light
Broke in upon our gloom.
And joy too deep for words to tell,
Was ours, one balmy day—
It was the softest and the last
Of the sweet month of May;

We bore her gently to the shade
Of an old favorite tree;
We placed her on the very spot
Where she had wished to be.
We wept sweet tears of gratitude,
And smiled with strange delight,
To see how freshly bloomed her cheek,
And how her eyes grew bright.

And one—the youngest of our band,
Twined roses for her hair;
And merrily our mirth rung out
Upon the pleasant air.
Then, when our hearts were full of hope,
E'en then she bowed her head;
And with a blessing on her lips
Her lovely spirit fled!

Yes! in that very home of life,
That seemed but made for bloom,
Death in our midst unheeded stood,
And claimed her for the tomb.
We put the red-rose garland off—
It was but mockery there—
And gathered half-blown buds of white,
To place upon her bier.

We had no words to tell our woe—
We were too sad to speak,
As, one by one, we pressed a kiss,
The LAST! upon her cheek.
And since, when all around are gay,
And birds are on the wing,
We hasten to our loved one's grave,
With the first flowers of Spring.

And now we bid farewell to our poet. The night is passing, the moon is high in heaven, and all nature sleeps in profound repose. We, too, will to slumber. Good angels guard you and us, reader!

AN HOUR WITH THE NEW POETS.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

If signs and portents are to be believed a new cycle of poetry approaches. Not that, as yet, any great master of song has arisen. In vain we look, among the crowd of competitors, for another Shakspeare, or Milton, or even Byron. But nevertheless the sky of poesy is full of brilliant coruscations. The ground trembles beneath us, as with undulations that, running before, announce the approach of some tremendous intellectual earthquake.

The poems of Alexander Smith are generally known. They have been before both the British and American public for some time, and, therefore, we shall make but a passing comment on them. They are full of the fire of youth, display the luxuriance of an almost tropical imagination, and are characterized by equal boldness and originality. A splendid career is open to Mr. Smith, if he proves faithful to his high vocation. But he must beware of the extravagant plaudits, which his meteor-like success has won; for so sudden was his burst, and so unexpected his genius, that he has been over-praised almost everywhere. In the comparative dearth of coteremporaneous poetry, his advent reminds us of one of his finest metaphors.

"That night the sky was heaped like clouds;
Through one blue gulf profound,
Begirt with many a cloudy crag,
The moon came rushing like a stag,
And one star like a hound."

But another poet than Smith has begun to attract attention in England. The son of a canal boatman, and himself a poor operative in a silk-mill, this new writer has had to contend against the obscurity of his lot, as well as the disadvantage of an almost total want of education. His name is Gerald Massey, and a volume of his poems, said to be indifferently printed, has just appeared in London. He writes principally on political themes. It is evident that the sufferings of his own lot, and the wrongs of English workmen as a class, have profoundly tinged his muse. The iron has entered his soul. Yet hope still clings to him. His poet's heart prophesies a glorious future at last. Like Christian, he hears consoling angel voices, and has dream-like visions of the Beautiful Land, even while walking the

Valley of the Shadow of Death. As proof of this we quote the bold, stirring lyric of

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

"High hopes that burn'd like stars sublime,
Go down i' the Heavens of Freedom!
And true hearts perish in the time
We bitterliest need 'em!
But never sit we down and say
There's nothing left but sorrow:
We walk the wilderness To-day,
The Promised Land To-morrow.

Our birds of song are silent now,
There are no flowers blooming!
Yet life stirs in the frozen bough,
And Freedom's Spring is coming!
And Freedom's tide comes up alway,
Tho' we may strand in sorrow;
And our good bark, a-ground To-day,
Shall float again To-morrow.

Thro' all the long, dark night of years
The People's cry ascendeth,
And earth is wet with blood and tears,
But our meek sufferance endeth!
The few shall not forever sway,
The many moid in sorrow:
The powers of hell are strong To-day,
But Christ shall rise To-morrow.

Tho' hearts brood o'er the Past, our eyes
With smiling Futures glisten!
For, lo! our day bursts up the skies;
Lean out your souls and listen!
The world rolls Freedom's radiant way,
And ripens with her sorrow;
Keep heart! who bear the Cross To-day
Shall wear the Crown To-morrow.

Oh, youth! flame-earnest, still aspire,
With energies immortal!
To many a Heaven of Desire,
Our yearning opes a portal!
And tho' age wears by the way,
And hearts break in the furrow,
We'll sow the golden grain To-day—
The harvest comes To-morrow.

Build up heroic lives, and all
Be like a sheathen sabre,
Ready to flash out at God's call,
Oh, Chivalry of Labor!
Triumph and Toil are twins: and aye
Joy's sun's i' the cloud of sorrow;
And 'tis the martyrdom To-day,
Brings victory To-morrow."

Noble words those, and fitly spoken at this crisis. Though, in some respects, the poem is rude, yet the fire of genius blazes in every line, and not only it, but the heroic purpose of a soul knowing that man must "suffer to be strong."

As a new poet of our own country has said,
typifying this great truth, by a sublime version.

"And that high suffering which we dread,
A higher joy discloses;
Men saw the thorns on Jesus' brow,
But angels saw the roses."

But love is as necessary to the poet as heroic courage or indignation at wrong. Gerald Massey has dignified his coarse, workman's lodgings, by some exquisite poems, directed, we presume, to his wife. He makes a Paradise for himself through the divine light of his imagination. Blessed gift, which, when united with a holy love, converts even the humblest home to a palace more beautiful than that of Kaisar or Sultan. We make room for one of these lyrics of love.

OUR FAIRY RING.

"Our world of empire is not large,
But priceless wealth it holds;
A little Heaven links marge to marge,
But what rich realms it folds!
And clasping all from outer strife
Sits Love with folded wing,
A-brood o'er dearer life-in-life,
Within our fairy ring,

Dear love!

Our hallowed fairy ring.

Thou leanest thy true heart on mine
And bravely bearest up!
Aye mingling Love's most precious wine
In Life's most bitter cup,
And evermore the circling hours
New gifts of glory bring;
We live and love like happy flowers,
All in our fairy ring,

Dear love

Our hallowed fairy ring.

We've known a many sorrows, sweet!
We've wept a many tears,
And often trode with trembling feet
Our pilgrimage of years,
But when our sky grew dark and wild,
All closelier did we cling:
Clouds broke to beauty as you smiled—
Peace crowned our fairy ring,

Dear love

Our hallowed fairy ring."

In contrast with this toiling, suffering man, whose whole life, at least in its human aspect, appears to have been one long "bearing of the cross," rises before us another new poet, whose days apparently have glided by in lettered luxury, if not in cloistered ease. He is a son of the venerated Dr. Arnold. His poetry differs from that of Massey as much almost as poetry can. The one is rough and wild, with associations confined to humble life, man's own heart, or the simple scenes of nature. The other is rich with allusions drawn from the learning of all lands. Like Gerald Massey, however, Mr. Arnold is, as yet, known to us only from English editions.

One of his poems, "The Forsaken Mermaid," is declared, by the "Westminster Review," to be as beautifully finished as anything in the English language. The legend is Norwegian. A King of the Sea marries an earthly maiden, and lives with her happily, for many years, but at last she leaves him for a visit to her friends, promising, however, to return. Time passes, but she comes not back. Scruples of conscience have arisen, and she chooses, as she thinks, between her soul and her family. The story is told by the old Sea King, in a wild, irregular melody to his children. Here is a description of a visit to earth, at Easter time, by him and his little ones, in hopes to bring the wife and mother back. Can you read it without tears?

"She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.

Children, dear, was it yesterday?

Children, dear, were we long alone?

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.

'Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say.

Come,' I said, and we rose through the surf in the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down,
Where the sea-stocks bloom to the white-walled town,
Through the narrow paved streets where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers;

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle, through the small leaded panes.

She sat by the pillar, we saw her clear.

'Margaret! hie! come, quick, we are here!'

'Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone.'

'The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.'

But, ah, she gave me never a look,

For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.

Loud prays the priest, shut stands the door.

'Come away, children, call no more.

Come away, come down, call no more.'

Down, down, down,

Down to the depths of the sea!

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,

Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings: 'Oh, joy! oh, joy!

For the humming street, and the child with its toy;

For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;

For the wheel where I spun,

And the blessed light of the sun.'

And so she sings her fill,

Singing most joyfully,

Till the shuttle falls from her hand,

And the whizzing wheel stands still.

She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,

And over the sand and at the sea,

And her eyes are set in a stare,

And anon there breaks a sigh,

And anon there drops a tear

From a sorrow-clouded eye,

And a heart sorrow-laden,

A long, long, sigh,

For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaid,

And the gleam of her golden hair."

In a different vein is the following, from

another poem, descriptive of two young children asleep.

"But they sleep in sheltered rest,
Like helpless birds in the warm nest
On the castle's Southern side,
Where feebly comes the mournful roar
Of buffeting wind and surging tide,
Through many a room and corridor.
Full on the window the moon's ray
Makes their chamber as bright as day.

It shines upon the blank white walls,
And on the snowy pillow falls,
And on two angel heads doth play,
Turn'd to each other: the eyes closed,
The lashes on the cheek reposed.

Round each sweet brow the cap close set
Hardly lets peep the golden hair;
Through the soft opened lips the air
Scarcely moves the coverlet.

One little wandering arm is thrown
At random on the counterpane,
And often the fingers closed in haste,
As if the baby owner chased
The butterflies again.

This stir they have, and this alone,
But else they are so still—
Ah, you tired madcaps, you lie still;

But were you at the window now,
To look forth on the fairy sight
Of your illumined haunts by night,
To see the park glades where you play
Far lovelier than they are by day,
To see the sparkle on the eaves,

And upon every giant bough
Of those old oaks whose wan red leaves
Are jeweled with bright drops of rain—
How would your voices run again!

And far beyond the sparkling trees
Of the castle park, one sees
The bare heath spreading clear as day,
Moor behind moor, far, far away,
Into the heart of Brittany.

And here and there looked by the land
Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,
And many a stretch of watery sand,
All shining in the white moonbeams;
But you see fairer in your dreams."

The ensuing extract is from a meditative poem, called "A Summer Night." It is of the loftiest order of verse, evincing a heroic soul, as well as an artist's inspiration. It depicts, in powerful and highly sustained metaphor, the full tragedy

of modern life. We know not, indeed, which spectacle is the most melancholy, that of the contented slave of Mammon described in the first stanzas, who has lost all noble aspirations, or that of the wild and reckless spirit sketched in the last, who, rebelling against a dead conventionalism, often rushes into impiety and ruin.

"And I. I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where in the sun's hot eye,

With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their minds to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of nought beyond their prison wall;

And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labor fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast,
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are
prest,

Death in their prison reaches them
Unfreed, having seen nothing still unblest.

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.

There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;

Nor does he know how there prevail,
Despotic on life's sea,

Trade winds that cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarr'd

By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves.

And then the tempest strikes him, and between
The lightning bursts is seen

Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strown deck

With anguished face and flying hair,
Grasping the rudder hard,

Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false impossible shore.

And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom,
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom."

This is grand. The poet, who can write thus, has true inspiration. Of both Massey and Arnold the world will yet hear more.

SCOTTISH SONGS AND BALLADS.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

It is not every poet who can write a song. A perfect lyric should be single in its theme, should go directly to the point, should never lose sight of the subject for an instant, should be clothed in language at once appropriate and musical, and should glow with patriotic enthusiasm, or melt with tenderness, but always be made vital with the sentiment or idea. Only when the heart is full and the imagination on fire, are thought and passion fused to the white heat of the lyric. It is for this reason that there are so few really good songs in the language. A thousand times poets have said to themselves, "Now I will write a lyric;" and never, when saying this, have they succeeded perfectly. Moore and Bayley are instances in point. On the other hand, some of the best songs we possess, have been written by persons unknown to fame before. "Auld Robin Gray," and a host besides, are examples familiar to all.

The most perfect of our songs are Scotch. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that these have a Highland origin, as the popular mind believes and some writers even assert who pretend to criticism. All the principal songs, which are known as Scotch, can be traced to the Lowlands, where the inhabitants have been substantially of the same race with the English, ever since the Normans conquered at Hastings, the Danes swarmed across the German ocean, or Scandinavian sea-kings ravaged the British coasts. The song of the Gael, like his bag-pipe, is rude and wild. But south of his barbarous hills, and all the way to the English border, the land is vocal with sweet lyrics. An able writer has said that every river, stream and lake, every mountain-slope and summit, every pastoral valley, every ruined tower, nay! almost every farm-house in the Scottish Lowlands has been celebrated in song.

It is, therefore, not because the Scotch are of a different race from the English, that the first can show so many songs, and the last so few. Five centuries ago the people south of the Tweed were as lyrical as those on the north of it; and they continued to remain so till down to a comparatively recent period. It is even doubtful if the English, in the age of Chaucer, had not more songs than the Scotch. It is certain that many,

which are now generally thought to belong to Scotland, can be traced back to an English ancestry. So late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, music and song were household companions of the English, almost as much so as with the Germans of to-day. But the great Puritan revolution was as iconoclastic toward rote and rebeck as toward images in the churches, and trampled out song-singing beneath its pitiless hoofs, as remorselessly as Cromwell's Ironsides rode down the cavaliers at Marston Moor. The Restoration, which made a vicious French taste fashionable, did nothing toward restoring the beauty of old English lyrics; and the accession of the House of Hanover, bringing in a coarse, dull court, made the case more hopeless than ever. In this way nearly all the old English songs have perished. But Scotland, by a series of fortuitous events, was saved from a similar doom. North of the border, and up to the very foot of the Highlands, the love of song continued, wherever a dialect of the Saxon English was spoken; and not only continued, but took deeper hold than ever of the popular heart, till it culminated at last in the immortal Burns.

Probably the most perfect song, in any language, is "Ae fond kiss and then we sever." It illustrates, in every burning word, what we have said of the lyric. Its glowing thoughts, intense emotion, and vivid language rush from the poet's soul, like molten lava from a volcano, setting everything a-blaze. Never were words and melody, pathos and passion, so fused together as in the second stanzas.

"I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love forever.
Had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

But the songs of Burns are too well known to require further mention. It is sufficient to say, that no poet, in any language, has left behind so many glorious lyrics. Next to him, perhaps, comes Allan Cunningham. There is one of his songs, at least, whose superior it would be difficult to select. We allude to that lament of the banished Jacobite, "Hame, hame, hame," which

Sir Walter Scott could never listen to without tears. Compare it with Campbell's "Exile of Erin," and see how far truth and Nature are above artificial trickery.

"Hame, hame, hame! oh, hame fain wad I be!
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!
When the flower is i' the bud, and the leaf is on the tree,
The lark shall sing me hame to my ain countrie.
Hame, hame, hame! oh, hame fain wad I be!
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!

The green leaf o' loyalty's beginning now to fa';
The bonnie white rose it is withering an' a';
But we'll water't wi' the bluid of usurping tyrannye,
And fresh it shall blaw in my ain countrie.
Hame, hame, hame! oh, hame fain wad I be!
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!

Oh, there's nocht now frae ruin my countrie can save,
But the keys o' kind Heaven, to open the grave,
That a' the noble martyrs who died for loyalty
May rise again and fight for their ain countrie.
Hame, hame, hame! oh, hame fain wad I be!
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!

The great now are gane wha attempted to save,
The green grass is growing abune their grave;
Yet the sun through the mirk seems to promise to me,
I'll shine on you yet in your ain countrie.
Hame, hame, hame! oh, hame fain wad I be!
Oh, hame, hame, hame, to my ain countrie!"

The ballad of "Helen of Kirkconnell" dates back beyond authentic authorship. It is a fitting companion to the above. Its directness, earnestness, and vivid language, even in the modernized version which we quote, are in the highest style of the lyric

"I wish I were where Helen lies—
Night and day on me she cries;
Oh, that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirkconnell lea!

Oh, Helen, fair beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart forevermair,
Until the day I die.

Cursed be the heart that thought the thought,
And cursed the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died for sake o' me.

Oh, think nae but my heart was sair
When my love fell and spak' nae mair;
I laid her down w' meikle care
On fair Kirkconnell lea.

I laid her down, my sword did draw,
Stern was our strife in Kirtle-shaw;
I hew'd him down in pieces sma',
For her that died for me.

Oh, that I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries,
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
'Oh, come, my love, to me!'

Oh, Helen fair, oh, Helen chaste!
Were I with thee I would be blest,
Where thou liest low and tak'at thy rest
On fair Kirkconnell lea!

I wish I were where Helen lies—
Night and day on me she cries:
I'm sick of all beneath the skies,
Since my love died for me."

As perfect a song of its kind, but in a different vein, is "There's Nae Luck About the House." The author was William Julius Mickle, who wrote it not quite a century ago. Burns pronounced it "the finest love-ballad in the Scotch, or perhaps in any other language." The joyous happiness of the "guide-wife," on hearing that her husband has come back safe, becomes infectious as we read, such is the exquisite harmony between the thought and the rhythm, till we can hardly avoid jumping to our feet and dancing with glee.

"But are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he's weel?
Is this a time to think o' wark?
Ye jauds, fling bye your wheel?
For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's nae luck about the house,
When our gudeman's awa'.

Is this a time to think o' wark,
When Colin's at the door?
Rax down my cloak—I'll to the quay,
And see him come ashore.

Rise up and make a clean fireside,
Put on the muckle pat;
Gie little Kate her cotton gown,
And Jock his Sunday's coat.

Mak their shoon as black as slaes,
Their stockins white as snaw;
It's a' to pleasure our gudeman—
He likes to see them braw.

There are twa hens into the crib
Hae fed this month or mair;
Mak haste and thraw their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare.

My Turkey slippers I'll put on,
My stockins pearl-blue—
It's a' to pleasure our gudeman,
For he's baith leal and true.

Sae sweet his voice, sae smooth his tongue,
His breath's like cauler air;
His very foot has music in't,
As he comes up the stair.

And will I see his face again,
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,
In troth I'm like to greet.

There's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's nae luck about the house,
When our gudeman's awa'."

Hogg, the "Ettrick Shepherd," has written many good songs, but the most famous, perhaps, is "When the Kye Come Hame." As a rural picture it is perfect. Without rising to the power of "Scots Who Hae," or moving the soul like "Auld Robin Gray," it yet makes a lasting

impression in the memory, and is as perfect of its kind. The memory in which "When the Kye Come Hame" is brought in at the end of every stanza, is especially charming.

"Come, all ye jolly shepherds
That whistle through the glen,
I'll tell ye of a secret
That courtiers dinna ken.
What is the greatest bliss
That the tongue o' man can name?
'Tis to woo a bonnie lassie
When the kye come hame.
When the kye come hame,
When the kye come hame;
'Tween the gloamin' and the mirk,
When the kye come hame.

'Tis not beneath the burgeton,
Nor yet beneath the crown,
'Tis not on couch of velvet,
Nor yet on bed of down;
'Tis beneath the spreading birch,
In the dell without a name,
Wi' a bonnie, bonnie lassie
When the kye come hame.

There the blackbird bigs his nest
For the mate he loves to see,
And up upon the tapmost bough,
Oh, a happy bird is he!
Then he pours his melting ditty,
And love 'tis a' the theme,
And he'll woo his bonnie lassie
When the kye come hame.

When the bluart bears a pearl,
And the daisy turns a pea,
And the bonnie lucken gowan
Has fauldit up his ee.
Then the laverock frae the blue lift
Draps down, and thinks nae shame
To woo his bonnie lassie
When the kye come hame.

Then the eye shines sae bright,
The hail soul to beguile,
There's love in every whisper,
And joy in every smile.
Oh, who would choose a crown,
Wi' its perils and its fame,
And miss a bonnie lassie
When the kye come hame?

See yonder pawky shepherd
That lingers on the hill—
His yowes are in the fauld,
And his lambs are lying still;
Yet he dawna gang to rest,
For his heart is in a flame
To meet his bonnie lassie
When the kye come hame.

Awa' wi' fame and fortune—
What comfort can they gi'e?—
And a' the arts that prey
On man's life and libertie.
Gi'e me the highest joy
That the heart o' man can frame,
My bonnie, bonnie lassie,
When the kye come hame."

Among the older songs, "Waly, Waly," is one of the most beautiful. The author is anonymous. It first appeared, we believe, in Ramsay's

"The Tea-Table Miscellany," published in 1724. It is as affecting as Motherwell's "My Heid is Like to Rend, Willie," while less diffuse; and the four last lines, perhaps, have never been surpassed.

"Oh, waly, waly up the bank,
And waly, waly down the brae,
And waly, waly yon burn-side,
Where I and my love went to gae!
I lean'd my back unto an aik,
And thought it was a trusty tree;
But first it bow'd and syno it brak:
Sae my true-love did lichtlie me.

Oh, waly, waly, but love be bonnie
A little time while it is new;
But when it's auld it waxes cauld,
And fades away like the morning dew.
Oh, wherefore should I busk my heid,
Or wherefore should I kame my hair?
For my true-love has me forsok,
And says he'll never love me mair.

Now Arthur's Seat shall be my bed,
The sheets shall ne'er be press'd by me,
St. Anton's Well shall be my drink,
Since my true-love has forsaken me.
Martinmas wind, when wilt thou blaw,
And shake the green leaves aff the tree?
Oh, gentle death, when wilt thou come?
For of my life I am wearie.

'Tis not the frost that freezes fell,
Nor blawing snaw's inclemencie;
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry;
But my love's heart's grown cauld to me.
When we came in by Glasgow toun,
We were a comely sight to see;
My love was clad in the black velvet,
And I mysel' in cramasie.

But had I wist before I kiss'd
That love had been sae ill to win,
I'd lock'd my heart in a case of gold,
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.
Oh, oh! if my young babe were born,
And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysel' were dead and gone,
And the green grass growin' ower me!"

Even to enumerate all the good Scotch songs would require more space than we have to spare. We must content ourselves, therefore, with naming merely a few. Allan Ramsay wrote several excellent ones, the best of which, perhaps, is "The Waukin O' the Fauld;" but his lyrics, in general, hardly deserve the praise they have received. His "Widow, Are Ye Waukin," is a good specimen of his freer style. There is an anonymous version of "Barbara Allan," which has singular merit, and is doubtless the original of the English song of the same name, which is far inferior. "Annie Laurie," another old song, is very good. Hector Macneil, who was born in 1746, was the author of several capital lyrics. His "Come Under My Plaidie," satirizes marrying for wealth as unmercifully as Thackeray's "Newcomes." It is almost too bitter, as these lines show.

"He wander'd hame weary, the nicht it was dreary,
And throwless he tint his gate 'mang the deep snaw;
The howlet was screaming; while Johnnie cried,

"Women

Wad marry auld Nick if he'd keep them aye braw."

"The Braes of Yarrow," by the Rev. John Logan, is a beautiful song. It is founded on a well known story, made immortal in Scottish ballads, but nowhere told more exquisitely than in Hamilton's "Busk ye, busk ye, my bonnie, bonnie bride." Jane Elliot's "The Flowers of the Forest," now more than a century old, and founded on an ancient ballad written after Flodden Field, all of which is lost but two or three lines, is also very fine. "Matrimonial Happiness," by John Lapraik, is second only to Burns' "John Anderson, My Jo." Susanna Blamire, about 1788, wrote "The Waefu' Heart," a song of great excellence. And to William Laidlaw, Scott's steward, amanuensis and friend, we owe that affecting song, "Lucy's Flittin'."

In satirical and political songs Scotland is as famous as in those of patriotism or love. "Our Gudeman Cam' Hame," by an anonymous author, first appeared in print in 1776; but is much older. Its satire is almost too broad for modern ears. "The Barring o' the Door," which is quite as old, is jollity itself. "Maggie Lauder," to use the words of Burns, is full of "Scottish *naivete* and energy." Burns himself has written almost a volume of satirical songs, and among the best is "The Deil's Awa' Wi' the Excise-man," in which the metro goes dancing with rejoicing glee. "Carle, an the King Come" is a chorus as old as Cromwell. An anonymous Jacobite song, under the same title, has considerable merit. We quote a stanza to show how bitter political songs were a century ago.

"When yellow corn grows on the rigs,
And gibbets stand to hang the Whigs,
Oh, then we'll a' dance Scottish jigs,
Carle an' the king come."

In "O'er the Water to Charlie" is a similar stanza. But who can wonder at it, when exile, confiscation and the scaffold rewarded those, who, from a mistaken sentiment of loyalty and duty, dared to fight for the Stuarts?

"It's weel I lo'e my Charlie's name,
Though some there be that abhor him;
But, oh, to see Auld Nick gaun hame,
And Charlie's goes before him!"

"Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie," an anonymous Jacobite song, is characterized by the most terrible invective, directed against that Duke of Cumberland, who commanded at Culloden, and whose merciless cruelty won for him the name of the "Bloody Butcher." This famous song amply revenges the beaten party, at least as far as poetry can. One may imagine the savage laughter with which it must have been hailed, when sung, with closed windows and doors, in some old Jacobite mansion, which had probably stood a siege from the Hanoverian troops. It is, however, too brutal for modern ears. Yet this very brutality paints the age more vividly than volumes of ordinary history.

Indeed, the song has often made the age, the action, or the person it celebrates, more famous than princes and kings. The Highland Mary of Burns will be remembered long after many a name, now thought certain to be immortal, has passed into comparative obscurity. And to all time, if our language survives so long, the wife of the Marquis of Montrose will be known by his famous song, than whose concluding stanzas we know nothing more appropriate with which to bring this article to an end.

"But if no faithless action stain
Thy love and constant word,
I'll make thee famous by my pen,
And glorious by my sword;
I'll serve thee in such noble ways
As ne'er was known before;
I'll deck and crown thy head with bays,
And love thee evermore."

THE LIFE AND POETRY OF THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

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THE LIFE AND POETRY OF THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.



T. Buchanan Read.

"MR. THOMAS BUCHANAN READ," says the North British Review, "is one among the youngest of American poets. This being the case, we do not hesitate to declare our opinion that he is the most promising of the living transatlantic poets." Even with its qualification this is high praise, and its value is increased by the reputation of the Review, Let us see if it is deserved.

Thomas Buchanan Read was born in 1822, in Chester county, Pennsylvania, where the first twelve years of his life were also passed. The neighborhood is essentially what in England would be called rural. An undulating country, diversified by clumps of woodland, luxuriant fields, and sparkling streams that wind in and out among the hills, continually suggests images of peace, repose and beauty. In the

long, sultry days of summer a dreamy quiet broods over the landscape, recalling Thompson's "Castle of Indolence," or "The Lotus-Eaters," of Tennyson. The influence of this district is to be traced in all the poetry of Mr. Read.

At the age of fourteen Read removed to Cincinnati. Here a visit to the studio of Clevanger made him ambitious to be a sculptor. He began to model under the direction of that artist, and had already acquired some proficiency, when his master left for Europe. But the love of the beautiful was too strong with the boy for this disappointment to divorce him from art. Since he could not become a sculptor, he resolved to be a painter; and accordingly, without a tutor, almost without instruction, he took up the palette and brush. His very first effort in oil

showed that Nature had given him the right feeling for his art. His reputation rapidly extended. General Harrison, then a candidate for the Presidency, sat to him for a portrait. Read, at this time, was scarcely eighteen. Yet, though thus successful, he was not indifferent to his mechanical deficiencies; and as there were no good schools for artists in the West, he determined to come East. In 1840 he removed to Boston, where he subsequently married, and lived five years, practicing his profession.

Up to this time, though he had frequently written fugitive verses, Read had published but little. But having made the acquaintance of Longfellow, the latter encouraged him to persevere; and this flattering notice decided his destiny. Henceforth half his heart was given to poetry, though he still worked energetically in his profession. He began to contribute to the leading periodicals, and soon became a favorite with readers, especially with those having the sagacity to discern, and the sincerity to acknowledge unheralded merit. Most of his best poems first appeared in this Magazine. In 1846 he came to Philadelphia. In 1850 he sailed for Europe, and spent a year in Italy, pursuing his studies as an artist. While at Florence he was intimate with the Brownings, who then resided in that home of poetry and art. On his return to the United States he visited England, where he painted several portraits. While in London, Messrs. Delf and Trubner applied to him for permission to publish a volume of his poems. The book attracted notice, passed rapidly to a second edition, and was received with favor by nearly all the critical journals. The famous "Closing Scene," originally published in this Magazine in January, 1852, called forth the especial commendations of the London press. Though since republished in nearly every newspaper in the United States, and familiar, we presume, to every reader, we here insert it again, as a necessary prelude to the consideration of Read's merits as a poet.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

Within his sober realm of leafless trees
The russet year inhaled the dreamy air;
Like some tanned reaper in his hour of ease,
When all the fields are lying brown and bare.

The gray barns, looking from their hazy hills
O'er the dim waters, widening in the vales,
Sent down the air a greeting to the mills,
On the dull thunder of alternate falls.

All sights were mellowed, and all sounds subdued,
The hills seemed farther, and the streams sang low;
As in a dream, the distant woodman hewed
His winter log with many a muffled blow.

The embattled forests, erewhile, armed in gold,
Their banners bright with every martial hue,
Now stood, like some sad beaten host of old
Withdrawn afar in Time's remotest blue.

On slumberous wings the vulture held his flight;
The dove scarce heard his sighing mate's complaint
And like a star, slow drowning in the light,
The village church vane seemed to pale and faint.

The sentinel cock upon the hillside crew—
Crew thrice, and all was stiller than before—
Silent till some replying warder blew
His alien horn, and then was heard no more.

Where, erst, the jay within the elm's tall crest
Made garrulous trouble round her unfledged young,
And where the oriole hung her swaying nest,
By every light wind like a censer swung;

Where sang the noisy masons of the eaves,
The busy swallows circling ever near,
Foreboding, as the rustic mind believes,
An early harvest, and a plenteous year:—

Where every bird which charmed the vernal feast,
Shook the sweet slumber from its wings at morn,
And warned the reapers of the rosy east:—
All now was songless, empty, and forlorn.

Alone, from out the stubble, piped the quail,
While croaked the crow through all the dreamy
Alone the pheasant, drumming in the vale, [gloom;
Made echo to the distant cottage loom.

There was no bud, no bloom upon the bowers;
The spiders wove their thin shrouds night by night;
The thistle-down, the only ghost of flowers,
Sailed slowly by—passed noiseless out of sight.

Amid all this—in this most cheerless air,
And where the woodbine shed upon the porch
Its crimson leaves, as if the year stood there,
Firing the floor with his inverted torch;—

Amid all this, the centre of the scene,
The white-haired matron, with monotonous tread,
Plied the swift wheel, and with her joyless mien,
Sat like a Fate and watched the flying thread.

She had known sorrow. He had walked with her,
Of supped, and broke the bitter ashen crust;
And, in the dead leaves, still she heard the stir
Of his black mantle trailing in the dust.

While yet her cheek was bright with summer bloom
Her country summoned and she gave her all,
And twice, war bowed to her his sable plume—
Re-gave the swords, to rust upon the wall.

Re-gave the swords—but not the hand that drew,
And struck for liberty its dying blow;
Nor him, who to his sire and country true,
Fell 'mid the ranks of the invading foe.

Long, but not loud, the droning wheel went on,
Like the low murmur of a hive at noon;
Long, but not loud, the memory of the gone,
Breathed through her lips, a sad and tremulous tone.

At last the thread was snapped—her head was bowed—
Life dropped the distaff through his hands serene;
And loving neighbors smoothed her careful shroud,
While Death and Winter closed the Autumn scene.

Of this fine composition the North British said—
"It is unquestionably the best American poem we have;" adding emphatically, "it is an addition to the permanent stock of poetry in the English language." Nor were these the words of unconsidered eulogy; for the reviewer, having praised where he thought praise due, proceeded frankly to censure what he disliked. He said—"There are faults in this little poem which greatly diminish its value as compared with what it ought to have been, and might have been, under the diligent and discerning polish of Mr. Read.

The embattled forests erewhile armed in gold,
Their banners bright with every martial hue—

are a sad interruption to the tone of peaceful melancholy which is otherwise admirably sustained throughout the poem; and the image is, moreover, in itself, good for little or nothing. The five concluding stanzas are not nearly up to the mark of the preceding portion of the piece, which, as far as regards general construction and form, is almost spoilt

by them. But the first thirteen stanzas, taken by themselves, constitute a truly inspired little poem. Tennyson himself, the great modern master of that kind of description which employs the objects of outward nature as a language for human feeling, has scarcely surpassed, in its way, this passage, which in our opinion, merits the fame that Gray's celebrated 'Elegy' has obtained, without deserving it nearly so well. The feeling of the three opening stanzas—the only unexceptionable passage of more than two or three lines in Gray's poem—is here sustained to a far greater length, and with much simpler language and imagery. Mr. Read's volume affords other equally remarkable instances of perception and polish; but in no other instance does he seem to us to have arrived at such depth of poetical feeling." Our personal friendship for Mr. Read may, perhaps, bias our judgment; for we coincide generally with the eulogistic part of this extract: but as we join also in the animadversions, our opinion may probably be considered impartial, notwithstanding the friendship. The North British, however, by invidious comparisons between Read and other poets, living and dead, has injured the weight of its criticism, which, deprived of these parts, is just enough. To define who is and who is not the greatest poet of an age or nation, is to assume the prerogatives of posterity, with but little possibility of employing them impartially: and if men cannot yet determine whether Homer or Milton is the greater, much the less can they decide the precedence, or apportion the renown of contemporaries.

The North British was not alone in its cordial appreciation of Read. It was followed by the London Leader in an elaborate and enthusiastic article. The London Weekly Paper, in a review of his volume, described the poems as "characterized by deep feeling, fanciful imagery, musical expression, and faultless versification." Eliza Cook's Journal, in an elaborate notice of the book, said that Read was "strongly imbued with the poetic genius," and had "the seeing eye, the feeling heart, and the inspired intellect of the true poet." It added: "We especially admire his landscape pictures: his 'little bits of scenery,' as artists term them, are particularly charming:—such subjects as 'The Wayside Spring,' 'The Deserted Road,' and 'Hazel Dell,' remind you of Creswick's and Redgrave's effects with the pencil, in their happiest moods." The London Critic, in a still more discriminating notice, holds the following language: "In many instances his descriptions are fearfully distinct. We not only see the scene that he reanimates from the plastic resources of his brain, but we feel its influence creeping and mingling with our fancy till soul and sense is pervaded. Desolation, or ruin, whether it be a cottage in an English valley, or a mastless ship on a strand, or Pompeii, is the saddest of earthly things. Its invisible hand knocks at the human heart, and tells it that it is dust, though it has hatreds and affections, hopes and ambitions now. Never was that desolation more vividly displayed

than by THOMAS BUCHANAN READ in his description of a deserted quay. It is a volume of four lines.

'The old, old Sea, as one in tears,
Comes murmuring with its foamy lips,
And knocking at the vacant piers,
Calls for its long-lost multitude of ships.'

"The position of a poet who can write thus cannot be long doubtful. Hood, in his *Haunted House*, has not surpassed this picture of utter desolation." And the North British, in a passage as yet unquoted, remarks: "Mr. Read has a very high sense of natural beauty: this kind of description is his forte."

We have offered these opinions from abroad, because, though it is scarcely true of Read, that "a prophet hath not honor in his own country," yet it seems to us juster to give the judgment of strangers, on this occasion, than our own. Our high estimate of the poet has been on record ever since he laid his first modest volume, years ago, before the American public. In his peculiar walk, and in his best efforts in that walk, we regard him as almost perfect. "The Closing Scene," so lauded in England, is doubtless his masterpiece; but he has written other poems nearly as fine; and we feel assured that, if he lives, he will yet excel it, writing his name immortally

"In his line
With his land's language."

We cannot better exhibit Read's delicate and peculiar genius, than by quoting a few of his most characteristic poems. Here are two, unequalled as word-pictures, describing different aspects of Nature, and insensibly creating sympathetic emotions. What a dreamy languor pervades the first!

SOME THINGS LOVE ME.

All within and all without me
Feel a melancholy thrill:
And the darkness hangs about me,
Oh how still;
To my feet, the river glideth
Through the shadow, sullen, dark;
On the stream the white moon rideth,
Like a barque.
And the linden leans above me,
Till I think some things there be,
In this dreary world that love me,
Even me!

Gentle flowers are springing near me,
Shedding sweetest breath around,
Countless voices rise to cheer me,
From the ground.
And the lone bird comes—I hear it
In the tall and windy pine
Pour the sadness of its spirit
Into mine.

There it swings and sings above me,
Till I think some things there be
In this dreary world that love me,
Even me!

Now the moon hath floated to me,
On the stream I see it sway,
Swinging, boat-like, as 't would woo me,
Far away—
And the stars bend from the azure,
I could reach them where I lie,
And they whisper all the pleasure
Of the sky.
There they hang and smile above me,
Till I think some things there be
In the very heavens that love me,
Even me!

How different the following. The melancholy

still remains; but it is no longer steeped in languor; it is wild and boisterous; it chills our hearts; it makes our knees totter as if we heard ghosts rustle by.

A WINDY NIGHT.

Alow and aloof,
Over the roof,
How the tempests swell and roar!
Though no foot is astrir,
Though the cat and the cur
Lie dozing along the kitchen floor,
There are feet of air
On every stair!
Through every hall—
Through each gusty door,
There's a jostle and bustle,
With a silken rustle,
Like the meeting of guests at a festival!

Alow and aloof,
Over the roof,
How the stormy tempests swell!
And make the vane
On the spire complain—
They heave at the steeple with might and main;
And burst and sweep
Into the belfrey on the bell!
They smite it so hard, and they smite it so well,
That the sexton tosses his arms in sleep
And dreams he is ringing a funeral knell.

That Read cannot help painting nature, and that he ever speaks through its manifold aspects, has been remarked before; and we know no better example of this than the ensuing poem, "in memory of a poet," entitled

NIGHTFALL.

I saw, in the silent afternoon,
The overlaid sun go down;
While, in the opposing sky, the moon,
Between the steeples of the town,

Went upward, like a golden scale
Outweighed by that which sank beyond;
And over the river, and over the vale,
With odors from the lily-pond,

The purple vapors calmly swung,
And, gathering in the twilight trees,
The many-vesper minstrels sung
Their plaintive mid-day memories,

Till, one by one, they drooped away
From music into slumber deep;
And now the very woodlands lay,
Folding their shadowy wings in sleep.

Oh, Peace! that, like a vesper psalm,
Hallows the daylight at its close;
Oh, Sleep! that, like the vapors calm,
Mantles the spirit in repose,—

Through all the twilight falling dim,
Through all the song which passed away,
Ye did not stoop your wings to him
Whose shallop on the river lay

Without an oar, without a helm;—
His great soul in his marvelous eyes
Gazing on from realm to realm,
Through all the world of mysteries!

In perusing these several poems, the reader must have been struck with the skill with which Read changes the musical expression, to accommodate himself to the idea. The difference in this respect, between "A Windy Night" and "Some Things Love Me," is particularly noticeable. In one of Read's earliest poems, "The City of The Heart," the sentiment suddenly alters from the calm joy of childhood to the exulting pomp of war; and the facility is wonderful with which the flute-like melody of the verses passes, all at once, into what seems the blare of a trumpet.

We conclude with a delicious poem, on a theme which has often inspired genius, yet never before, perhaps, so successfully.

ENDYMION.

What time the stars first flocked into the blue,
Behind young Hesper, shepherd of the eve,
Sleep bathed the fair boy's lids with charmed dew,
'Mid flowers that all day blossomed to receive
Endymion.

Lo! where he lay encircled in his dream;
The moss was glad to pillow his soft hair,
And toward him leaned the lily from the stream,
And hanging vine waved wooing in the air,
Endymion.

The brook that erewhile won its easy way,
O'errun with meadow grasses long and cool,
Now reeled into a fuller tide and lay
Caressing in its clear enamored pool,
Endymion.

And all the sweet delicious airs that fan
Enchanted gardens in their hour of bloom,
Blown through the soft invisible pipes of Pan,
Breathed, 'mid their mingled music and perfume,
Endymion.

The silvery leaves that rustled in the light,
Sent their winged shadows o'er his cheek entranced;
The constellations wandered down the night,
And whispered to the dew-drops where they danced,
Endymion.

Lo! there he slept, and all his flock at will
Went star-like down the meadow's azure mist;—
What wonder that pale Dian with a thrill
Breathed on his lips her sudden love, and kissed
Endymion!

"Poesy," says Lord Bacon, "doth truly refer to the imagination, which, not being tied to the laws of matter, may at pleasure *join that which Nature hath severed, and sever that which Nature hath joined.*" Is not such the poetry we have quoted?

THE OLD SPANISH BALLADS.*

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE very name of Spain conjures up visions of romance. We think at once of the Alhambra, of the dark-eyed damsels of Seville, of Gil Blas, of Don Quixote, of the wild, Andalusian bulls, and of the hills around Granada, every foot of which almost has witnessed some combat between Moor and Christian. But the old Spanish ballads give us the additional element of ancient chivalry. We see, in fancy, the rout of Roncesvalles; we hear the Cid come thundering on Baveca; and we listen to the shout of "Allah, Il Allah," as the Paynims sweep to battle. We are back in the old days, when every inch of Spanish territory was disputed with the infidel, and when every Spaniard was a hero.

No writer has re-produced the spirit of this ancient time so successfully as Lockhart in his translation of the Spanish ballads. These ballads forms the oldest, as well as largest collection of popular poetry, properly so called, that is to be found in the literature of any European nation. Many of them have been written for centuries. Like the old English ballads, with which Percy, Ritson, Ellis and others have made us familiar, they were the instinctive utterance of a brave and poetical people, in times of turmoil, peril and heroism. Nothing, therefore, can be less artificial than they are. They speak right to the heart. Those devoted to war ring out like the blast of a trumpet. It is as refreshing, amid the conceits of modern poetry, to meet these old ballads, as to pass suddenly, from the *petit-maitre* fountain of a stiff, conventional garden, to some clear, cool spring, gushing out from under a mossy rock, in the heart of a forest.

The English volumes of Lockhart's Ballads are too costly for general circulation. We are glad, therefore, to see that a cheap, yet elegant edition has been issued by Whittemore, Niles & Hall, a firm of Boston booksellers, whose well-selected publications are rapidly winning for them a high reputation with persons of taste. It has been objected, we know, that Lockhart's translations are not always literal. But to be

always literal, in translating, is often to be unfaithful; and Lockhart, aware of this, has sought to re-produce the spirit of his originals, and has succeeded. His Spanish ballads are such, in fact, as their authors would have made them, had they written in English.

The bull-fight, that national pastime of Spain, was never better described, for example, than in the ballad entitled, "The Bull-Fight of Gazul." Mr. Lockhart is of opinion that this particular ballad is of Moorish origin. We have not space for the whole ballad, but give the concluding stanzas, premising that three cavaliers have already fallen in the ring, and that the bull Harpado has never been worsted.

"With the life-blood of the slaughtered lords all slippery is the sand,
Yet proudly in the centre bath Gazul ta'en his stand;
And ladies look with heaving breast, and lords with anxious eye,
But he firmly extends his arm—his look is calm and high.

Three bulls against the knight are loosed, and two come roaring on,
He rises high in stirrup, forth stretching his rejon;
Each furious beast, upon the breast he deals him such a blow,
He blundly totters and gives back across the sand to go.

"Turn, Gazul, turn!" the people cry—the third comes up behind,
Low to the sand his head holds he, his nostrils snuff the wind;
The mountaineers that lead the steers without stand whispering low,
'How thinks this proud Alcayde to stun Harpado so?'

From Guadiana comes he not, he comes not from Xenii,
From Gundalarif of the plain, or Barres of the hill:
But where from out the forest burst Xarama's waters clear,
Beneath the oak trees was he nursed—this proud and stately steer.

Dark is his hide on either side, but the blood within doth boil,
And the dun hide glows, as if on fire, as he pores to the turmoil.
His eyes are jet, and they are set in crystal rings of snow;
But now they stare with one red glare of brass upon the foe.

Upon the forehead of the bull the horns stand close and near,
From out the broad and wrinkled skull like daggers they appear;

* Ancient Spanish Ballads; Historical and Romantic. Translated by J. G. Lockhart. A new revised edition, with a Biographical notice. 1 vol. Boston: Whittemore, Niles & Hall.

*His neck is massy, like the trunk of some old knotted tree,
Whereon the monster's shagged mane, like billows curled, ye see.*

*His legs are short, his hams are thick, his hoofs are black as night,
Like a strong flail he holds his tail in fierceness of his might;
Like something molten out of iron, or hewn from forth the rock,
Harpado of Xarama stands, to bide the Alcayde's shock.*

Now stops the drum; close, close they come; thrice meet, and thrice give back;
The white foam of Harpado lies on the charger's breast of black—
The white foam of the charger on Harpado's front of dun;
Once more advance upon his lance—once more, thou fearless one!

Once more, once more!—in dust and gore to ruin must thou reel!—
In vain, in vain thou tearest the sand with furious heel—
In vain, in vain, thou noble beast!—I see, I see thee stagger,
Now keen and cold thy neck must hold the stern Alcayde's dagger!

They have slipped a noose around his feet, six horses are brought in,
And away they drag Harpado with a loud and joyful din.
Now stoop thee, lady, from thy stand, and the ring of price bestow
Upon Gazul of Algava, that hath laid Harpado low."

In a different vein is "The Lamentation for Celin." This ballad also evidently had a Moorish origin. We can suppose it sung, during the last days of Granada, by Andalusian maids, as the twilight came on, sad and silent, and the sound of the evening trumpets from the beleaguering hosts came wafted to the town.

THE LAMENTATION FOR CELIN.

"At the gate of old Granada, when all its bolts are barred,
At twilight, at the Vega gate, there is a trampling heard;
There is a trampling heard, as of horses treading slow,
And a weeping voice of women, and a heavy sound of woe.
What tower is fallen, what star is set, what chief come these bewailing?
'A tower is fallen, a star is set? Alas! alas, for Celin!'

Three times they knock, three times they cry, and wide the doors they throw;
Dejectedly they enter, and mournfully they go;
In gloomy lines they mustering stand beneath the willow porch,
Each horseman grasping in his hand a black and flaming torch;
Wet is each eye as they go by, and all around is wailing,
For all have heard the misery. 'Alas! alas, for Celin!'

Him, yesterday, a Moor did slay, of Bencerraje's blood—
'Twas at the solemn jousting—around the nobles stood:
The nobles of the land were by, and ladies bright and fair
Looked from their latticed windows, the haughty sights to share;
But now the nobles all lament—the ladies are bewailing—
For he was Granada's darling knight. 'Alas! alas, for Celin!'

Before him ride his vassals, in order two by two,
With ashes on their turbans spread, most pitiful to view;
Behind him his four sisters, each wrapped in sable veil,
Between the tambour's dismal strokes take up their doleful tale;
When stops the muffled drum, ye hear their brotherless bewailing,
And all the people, far and near, cry, 'Alas! alas, for Celin!'

Oh! lovely lies he on the bier, above the purple pall,
The flower of all Granada's youth, the loveliest of them all;
His dark, dark eyes are closed, his rosy lip is pale,
The crust of blood lies black and dim upon his burnished mail;
And ever more the hoarse tambour breaks in upon their wailing—
Its sound is like no earthly sound, 'Alas! alas, for Celin!'

The Moorish maid at the lattice stands—the Moor stands at his door;
One maid is wringing of her hands, and one is weeping sore;
Down to the dust men bow their heads, and ashes black they strew
Upon their brodered garments, of crimson, green, and blue;
Before each gate the bier stands still—then bursts the loud bewailing
From door and lattice, high and low—'Alas! alas, for Celin!'

An old, old woman cometh forth, when she hears the people cry—
Her hair is white as silver, like born her glazed eye:
'Twas she that nursed him at her breast—that nursed him long ago:
She knows not whom they all lament, but soon she well shall know!
With one deep shriek, she through doth break, when her ears receive their wailing:
'Let me kiss my Colin ere I die! Alas! alas, for Celin!'

"The Cid's Wedding" gives us a glimpse of social manners centuries ago. No letter, from "Our Own Correspondent," could narrate, more graphically than this old ballad, the incidents of a nuptial ceremony in ancient Burgos. There is a spice of humor in the ballad, of which one example is the manner in which the poet describes the hiring "the horned fiend for twenty maravedis:" a person to play this character being as indispensable, in old Spanish processions, as the hobby-horse in English May-day games.

"The King had taken order that they should rear
an arch,
From house to house all over, in the way that they
must march;
They have hung it all with lances, and shields, and
glittering helms,
Brought by the Campeador from out the Moorish
realms.

They have scattered olive-branches and rushes on
the street,
And the ladies fling down garlands at the Campea-
dor's feet;
With tapestry and broidery their balconies between,
To do his bridal honor, their walls the burghers
screen.

They lead the bulls before them all covered o'er with
trappings;
The little boys pursue them with hootings and with
clappings;
The fool, with cap and bladder, upon his ass goes
prancing,
Amidst troops of captive maidens with bells and
cymbals dancing.

With antics and with fooleries, with shouting and
with laughter,
They fill the streets of Burgos—and the Devil he
comes after;
For the King has hired the horned fiend for twenty
maravedis,
And there he goes, with hoofs for toes, to terrify the
ladies.

Then comes the bride Ximena—the king he holds
her hand;
And the Queen; and, all in fur and pall, the nobles
of the land.
All down the street the cars of wheat are round
Ximena flying,
But the King lifts off her bosom sweet whatever
there is lying."

Bavioca, the steed of the Cid, is as famous, in
the legendary lore of Spain, as his master him-
self. Whoever is fond of a fine horse will appre-
ciate the following ballad. No wonder that the
Cid left this direction in his will:—"When ye
bury Bavioca, dig deep, for shameful thing were
it that he should be eaten by curs, who hath
trampled down so much currish flesh of Moors."
No wonder, either, that these directions were
followed, and Bavioca buried, by the side of his
master, under the trees in front of the convent
of San Pedro of Cardena.

"The King looked on him kindly, as on a vassal
true;

Then to the King Ruy Diaz spake, after reverence
due:

"Oh, King, the thing is shameful, that any man
beside
The liege lord of Castile himself should Bavioca ride

"For neither Spain nor Araby could another charger
bring
So good as he, and certes, the best befits my king.
But that you may behold him, and know him to the
core,
I'll make him go as he was wont when his nostrils
smelt the Moor."

With that, the Cid, clad as he was in mantle furred
and wide,
On Bavioca vaulting, put the rowel in his side;
And up and down, and round and round, so fierce
was his career,
Streamed like a pennon on the wind Ruy Diaz
minivero.

And all that saw them praised them—they lauded
man and horse,
As matched well, and rivalless for gallantry and
force;
Ne'er had they looked on horseman might to this
knight come near,
Nor on other charger worthy of such a cavalier.

Thus, to and fro a-rushing, the fierce and furious
steed,
He snapped in twain his hither rein; 'God pity now
the Cid!
God pity Diaz!' cried the lords; but when they looked
again,
They saw Ruy Diaz ruling him with the fragment
of his rein;
They saw him proudly ruling, with gesture firm and
calm,
Like a true lord commanding, and obeyed as by a
lamb.

And so he led him foaming and panting to the King;
But 'No!' said Don Alphonso, 'it were a shameful
thing
That peerless Bavioca should ever be bestrid
By any mortal but Bivar—mount, mount again, my
Cid!"

We regret, both that we have no more space
to spare, and that it would be unjust to the pub-
lishers, to continue these extracts. The speci-
mens we have given of this delightful volume
will prove, we trust, an incentive to buy the
book. We are sure, if we found "Lockhart's
Ballads" on a lady's boudoir table, we should
mentally pronounce her superior, in culture,
taste and refinement.

THE POETRY OF BAYARD TAYLOR.*

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

A GREAT poet is not made in a day. An original one is not nurtured by books, but at the bountiful bosom of Nature. We know no better illustration of these truisms than the career of Bayard Taylor.

We remember him, when he first began, a printer's apprentice, to contribute to the magazines of the day; and one of his comparatively rude efforts, published at that time, is on our table as we write. We remember him subsequently, when, having projected a tour to Europe, he made an engagement to correspond with a weekly newspaper of which we were then part proprietor, and which resulted in the series of letters which was afterward published, under the name of "Views A-Foot." The interview chanced to take place with our partner, so that we did not make the acquaintance of the poet. Fate has never since thrown us together. But we know him in his books, and that, in one sense, is better, since no partiality of personal friendship can warp our judgment.

Looking back on the earlier poems of Bayard Taylor, and comparing them with those in the volume before us, we cannot resist the conviction that, if he improves in the next ten years, as much as he has in the ten which have passed, he will have but few rivals in the American muse. No cotemporary, indeed, either here or in England, has exhibited so steady and consistent a progress. Every year displays a marked improvement. His mind grows, like a vigorous oak, healthily, incessantly, sturdily, and, like it, holds out certain assurance of unrivalled majesty, if no sudden tempest lays it prematurely low.

The secret of this steady improvement is to be found, we think, in a high physical organization, which not only gives energy to his poems, but impels him to almost incessant travel, and thus stores his mind with images and associations forever fresh. Our modern poets live too much in books. They dawdle, in morning gowns and slippers, before their library fires, when they should be scaling the mountain or studying mankind. Their blood stagnates in consequence; their brains work sluggishly; they have not the fire, imagination, or power of the bards of old.

* A Book of Romances, Lyrics, and Songs. By Bayard Taylor. 1 vol. Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields.

They give us, not fresh pictures from Nature, but elegant pieces of mosaic-work, put together, with rare skill, from the older masters. Modern poetry, indeed, is very much like Balfe's operas, a bit stolen here, a bit stolen there, original only in the impudence and tact with which the thefts are sought to be concealed.

It is in lyrical poetry, we think, that Bayard Taylor succeeds most eminently. He has the true Pindaric fire. What he calls "Romances," in the volume before us, appear to be his favorites; but, though full of merit, we cannot regard them as his best productions. "Mon-da-Min," "The Soldier and the Pard," or even "Hylas," are inferior, to our taste, to any one of half a dozen lyrics we might select. What, indeed, can be finer than the opening stanzas of the Ode to Shelley?

"Why art thou dead? Upon the hills once more
The golden mist of waning Autumn lies;
The slow-pulsed billows wash along the shore
And phantom isles are floating in the skies.
They wait for thee: a spirit in the sand
Hushes, expectant for thy coming tread;
The light wind pants to lift thy trembling hair;
Inward, the silent land
Lies with its mournful woods;—why art thou dead,
When Earth demands that thou shalt call her fair?"

The solemn, stately march of the verse, not less than the appositeness of the imagery betrays the true artist. Equally noble as a lyric is "The Harp," which we regret we have not space to quote entire: but we pass it to insert a poem, which is even more of a favorite with us, perhaps because its allusions are classical rather than romantic.

TAURUS.

"The Scorpion's stars crawl down behind the sun,
And when he drops below the verge of day,
The glittering fangs, their servid courses run,
Cling to his skirts and follow him away.
Then, ere the heels of flying Capricorn
Have touched the Western mountain's fading rim,
I mark, stern Taurus, through the twilight grey
The glinting of thy horn,
And sullen front uprising large and dim,
Bent to the starry hunter's sword, at bay.

Thy hoofs, unwilling, climb the spheny vault;
Thy red eye trembles with an angry glare,
When the hounds follow, and in fierce assault
Bay through the fringes of the lion's hair.
The stars that once were mortal in their love,
And by their love are made immortal now,
Cluster like golden bees upon thy mane,
When thou, possessed with Jove,
Bore sweet Europa's garlands on thy brow
And stole her from the green Sicilian plain.

Type of the stubborn force that will not bend
To loftier art—soul of defiant breath
That blindly stands and battles to the end,
Nerving resistance with the throes of death—
Majestic Taurus! when thy wrathful eye
Flamed brightest, and thy hoofs a moment stayed
Their march at Night's meridian, I was born;

But in the Western sky,

Like sweet Europa, Love's fair star delayed,
To hang her garland on thy silver horn.

Thou giv'st that temper of enduring mould,
That alights the wayward bent of Destiny—
Such as sent forth the shaggy Jarls of old
To launch their dragons on the unknown sea:
Such as kept strong the sinews of the sword,
The proud, hot blood of battle—welcome made
The headsman's axe, the rack, the martyr-fire,

The ignominious cord,

When but to yield, had pomps and honors laid
On heads that moulder in ignoble mire.

Night is the Summer when the soul grows ripe
With Life's full harvest: of her myriad suns,
Thou dost not gild the quiet herdsman's pipe
Nor royal state, that royal action shuns.
But in the noontide of thy ruddy stars
Thrive strength, and daring, and the blood whence
springs

The Heraclidean seed of heroes: then

Were sundered Gaza's bars;

Then, 'mid the smitten Hydra's loosened rings,
His slayer rested, in the Lernean fen.

Thou sway'st the heart's red tides, until they bear
The kindled spirit on their mounting wave,
To Glory's flood-mark; in thy steadfast glare
Ago thaws his ice, and thrills beside the grave.
Not Bacchus, by his span of panthers borne,
And flushed with triumph of the purple vine,
Can give his sons so fierce a joy as thou,

When, filled with pride and scorn,

Thou mak'st relentless anger seem divine,
And all Jove's terror clothes a mortal brow.

Thine is the subtle element that turns
To fearless act the impulse of the hour—
The secret fire, whose flash electric burns
To every source of passion and of power.
Therefore I hail thee, on thy glittering track:
Therefore I watch thee, when the night grows dark,
Slow-rising, front Orion's sword along
The starry zodiac,
And from thy mystic beam demand a spark
To warm my soul with more heroic song."

The volume before us affords many evidences of the great sorrow which, it is understood, has partly caused the poet's exile. The story has been told already in print. But, even if it had not, we do not know that confidence would be violated by its rehearsal; while many of the poems, here published, would be only half understood, if the pathetic narrative was kept back. The tale is soon told. In early boyhood Bayard Taylor loved: his feelings were reciprocated; and a betrothal took place. But the marriage was prudentially delayed, it is said, until the poet should have won a fitting home for his bride. Years passed. When, however, he had nearly achieved the goal of his ambition, consumption assailed his promised wife; she faded gradually away; and at last died in her husband's arms, for, before her decease, her lover had been married to her.

A series of poems, in the present volume, unwittingly tell the melancholy story, and reveal the agonies of grief with which the lover watched the death-bed and mourned the departed. We begin with one written about a year ago.

DECEMBER.

"Moan, ye wild winds! around the pane,
And fall, thou drear December rain!
Fill with your gusts the sullen day,
Tear the last clinging leaves away!
Reckless as yonder naked tree,
No blast of yours can trouble me.

Give me your chill and wild embrace,
And pour your baptism on my face;
Sound in mine ears the airy moan
That sweeps in desolate monotone.
Where on the unsheltered hill-top beat
The marches of your homeless feet!

Moan on, ye winds! and pour, thou rain!
Your stormy sobs and tears are vain,
If shed for her, whose fading eyes
Will open soon on Paradise:
The eye of Heaven shall blind be,
Or ere ye cease, if shed for me."

The second poem was probably composed at a later stage of the tragedy. With what heart-rending entreaty the poet supplicates heaven!

A PRAYER.

"Heaven, send not yet thy messenger!
Thy crystal courts are trod
By angels who resembled her,
Ere they were called to God.
They walk thy floors of starry gold,
Choiring thine awful space,
When round their brows the white wings fold
Before the Father's face.
Their myriads fill thy shining sea,
But Earth has one alone for me.

Oh, leave her, Heaven! she will not make
Thy bowers more bright and fair,
Nor bid a sweeter harp awake
In thy melodious air;
She will not weave a brighter crown
Of amaranth, on thy shore,
Than cast thy burning seraphs down
When mutely they adore:
But she can bid me hear thy streams
And see thy glory in my dreams.

Not yet! Thy call should welcome be
As sleep to weary eyes,
Nor leave behind, in mockery,
A pang that never dies:
Should touch the heart like harpings loud,
White wings and waving hair,
Not with a blast that leaves it bowed
In terror and despair.
Thy life is peace, thy world is bliss:
Spare thou my only joy in this!"

The following, which we select for the third of the series, will draw tears, we know, when read as a part of this sad story.

THE TWO VISIONS.

"Through days of toil, through nightly fears,
A vision blessed my heart for years;
And so secure its features grew,
My heart believed the blessing true.

I saw her there, a household dove,
In consummated peace of love,
And sweeter joy and saintlier grace
Breathed o'er the beauty of her face:

The joy and grace of love at rest,
The fireside music of the breast,
When vain desires and restless schemes
Sleep, pillowed on our early dreams.

Nor her alone: beside her stood,
In gentler types, our love renewed;
Our separate beings one, in Birth—
The darling miracles of Earth.

The mother's smile, the children's kiss,
And home's serene, abounding bliss;
The fruitage of a life that bore
But idle Summer blooms before:

Such was the vision, far and sweet,
That, still beyond Time's lagging feet,
Lay glimmering in my heart for years,
Dim with the mist of happy tears.

That vision died, in drops of woe,
In blotting drops, dissolving slow:
Now, toiling day and sorrowing night,
Another vision fills my sight.

A cold mound in the winter snow;
A colder heart at rest below;
A life in utter loneliness hurled,
And darkness over all the world."

There are other poems, of a similar character, which we might quote: but we forbear. Enough has been seen to awaken sympathy, and we now reverently let fall the veil. When the heart drips blood, it is not for curious eyes to gaze, scarcely even for loving ones. Perhaps, little as we have said, we have told too much; but it is difficult to separate the poet from the man; and the sorrows of the one, if he has made himself dear to us, seem a part of our inheritance of affection.

It is impossible, after this, to speak of Bayard Taylor as of an ordinary writer. Cold analysis seems cruel to one like him. Perhaps, at another time, we may return to the consideration of his genius, in order to vindicate, in all its details, the exalted judgment we have pronounced upon it.

THE POETRY OF GEORGE H. BOKER.*

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

WE always welcome, with pleasure, a new volume by this writer. No American poet, except Longfellow, polishes his lines so carefully. No one, among our younger authors, exhibits more genius. No one, old or young, has displayed half such dramatic ability. And no one, in the composition of the sonnet, approaches the vigor, the stateliness, or the sonorous ring of his verse.

The principal poem, in the volume before us, is a dramatic sketch, entitled "The Podesta's Daughter." To do justice to this beautiful fragment would require us to copy it entire, for, like an exquisite statue, its merit consists in its perfect symmetry as a whole, rather than in the elegance of detached parts. The story is the reverse of that of the King of Hungary's daughter, who, as the old ballad tells, loved "a squire of low degree;" for here it is the duke's son and heir, who loves the humble child of the Podesta. But the father of the maiden is proud, and her brother is passionate. Between them, they bring about the separation of the lovers, and not only this, but fill the young count's mind with unfounded jealousies, so that he abandons his native village in despair, leaving Giulia to die prematurely, and of a broken-heart. The character of the heroine, thus sacrificed to her family's pride, is drawn, by Mr. Boker, with a delicacy that renders it one of the sweetest creations of American poetry: indeed, we cannot avoid going further, and saying that no other poet, now living, could, without imitation, have come so near to the ideal of womanhood, as found in Shakespeare and the older writers.

In addition to "The Podesta's Daughter," the volume contains the "Ivory Carver," "I Have A Cottage," "The River and the Maiden," "The Ballad of Sir John Franklin," "The Song of the Earth," and "The Vision of the Goblet," all poems of high merit: and, likewise, several songs and sonnets. In the "Ivory Carver" we recognize a lofty purpose which we would be glad to see more frequently. The story, in few words, is that of a humble artist, who sits down to carve a Crucifixion out of ivory, full of the inspiration of a mighty thought. Day and night he toils on, to the neglect of his worldly substance, until,

at last, his wife, worn out by privation, dies before his sight. And now sorrow begins to cloud the divine image he has had in his mind.

"Wearily worked the artist alone,
And his tears ran down the ivory-bone
And the presence lost its wonted glow,
For its trembling heart was beating low,
And the stealthy shadows came creeping in
With the silent tread of a flattered sin;
Till the spirit fled to the Christ's own face,
Like a hunted man to a place of grace;
On the crown, the death-wrung eye, the tear,
The placid triumph, faint yet clear,
That trembled around the mouth, and last
On the fatal wound its brightness passed,
Shrinking low down in the horrid scar,
And flickering there like a waning star
Slowly he labored with drooping head,
For the artist's heart from his work had fled."

But comfort dawned on him at last. An invisible presence, that of his lost wife, irradiated his soul: he felt a "dumb stir" in his heart; a glow ran through its currents, and, with renewed inspiration, he bent again to his task. Then came his children, with playful eloquence, seeking to lure him from his labor, telling him of bright flowers and sunny landscapes. But when he pointed proudly to his work, as to his excuse, they answered that they saw nothing lovely in it, but only pain and death stamped on every lineament. At this doubts dismayed him. Soon his children died. And now, in his mad despair, the artist dashed the ivory Christ to the ground. He cursed the thought he had striven so long to embody. He cursed earth and heaven. He cursed the womb that bare him. And he would have cursed the immaculate Name itself but that the angelic presences, which had inspired his soul with his idea, and which had sustained him through every temptation, palsied, unseen, his tongue. Then, high in heaven, shone out a star, and by it glimmered two fainter ones; and he felt that his lost wife and darlings were looking lovingly, yet reprovably upon him. His soul melted at once. The mystery of mysteries was opened to him, as if by inspiration: he fell on his knees, sweet tears rising to his eyes.

"And the tears so magnified his gaze,
That the face of Heaven seemed all ablaze
With light and mercy. He knew the stars
That looked through his earthly dungeon bars.
'I see,' he shouted, 'ye live, ye live:
Death is a phantom! Oh! God forgive.'"

What immediately follows is very fine.

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* The Podesta's Daughter, and other Miscellaneous Poems. By George H. Boker. 1 vol. Philadelphia: A. Hart.

"Stand still worked the artist alone,
 Carving the Christ from the ivory-bone.
 Again the bright presence shone around
 With a light more dazzling, more profound.
 Through day, through night, through fair, through foul,
 The artist wrought with a single soul;
 And when hand would tire, or eye grow dim,
 He looked at the stars that looked at him,
 Until power and vision both were given,
 And he carved the Christ by light from Heaven.
 Under each cruel thorn-point he hid
 A world of grief, and each drooping lid
 Was closed round its mortal tears of pain;
 But the nostrils curved in proud disdain
 Of death and his feeble tyranny;
 And the mouth was calm with victory.
 High over all, the majestic brow
 Looked down on the storm which raged below,
 Big with the power and god-like will
 That said to the sinking heart—'Be still!'
 And it was still. *For who once had looked
 On this mighty brow, saw not the crooked
 And reined fingers that clutched the nails,
 Nor the fitful spasms that comes and fails
 In the dropping legs, nor the wide wound;
 Oh, no! the thorn-wreath seemed twisted round
 A victor's head, like a diadem,
 And each thorn-point bore a royal gem."*

The conclusion of the poem is in an equally
 lofty vein. The fame of the Ivory Christ, thus
 perfected out of sorrow, agony, and sin, spreads
 far and wide, so that, after the artist's death, the
 possession of the crucifix is coveted even by the
 successor of St. Peter. A cardinal's hat pur-
 chases the relic from the abbot of the monastery
 where it is sacredly kept: but, when the Pope's
 messengers arrive to receive the treasure, they
 fancy they behold only an ordinary piece of
 workmanship, until a saintly young friar directs
 his look to it, when, under his inspired gaze, the
 ivory seems to glow and move, and they shout,
 one and all, "a miracle." But Friar Anselm,
 reproving their want of faith, points out wherein
 the miracle truly lies, till his hearers stand re-
 buked before his earnest eloquence.

"Here Anselm's speech made a sudden pause.
 Lost in the grand passion at his heart,
 With flashing eyes, and lips wide apart—
 As one whose full subject overbore,
 In torrents, the power to utter more—
 He stood all trembling. *Like heavy clouds
 Moved by one wind, the friars in crowds,
 Gloomily under the portal eaves,
 In half voice chaunting a vesper psalm;
 And the priests were standing there alone
 With night, the Christ, and four stars that shone—
 Brighter and brighter as daylight fled—
 Strangely together, just overhead."*

Most of the sonnets, in this volume, are of rare
 excellence. There is one on "Andrew Jackson,"
 in his character as a lion-hearted American, which
 has the ring of Wordsworth's finest poems of this
 description: we do not consider that even the
 famous one on Milton surpasses it. The follow-
 ing, evidently written in contemplating a war of
 allied Europe against us, recalls the grand days
 of old. The man, whose indignant soul can pen
 lines like these, is as much of a hero as a poet.
 As we read them, Leonidas and Tell, Bannock-
 burn and Bunker Hill rise before us.

"What though the cities blaze, the ports be sealed,
 The fields untilled, the hands of labor still,
 Ay, every arm of commerce and of skill
 Palsied and broken; shall we therefore yield—
 Break up the sword, put by the dintless shield?
 Have we no home upon the wooded hill,
 That mocks a siege? No patriot ranks to drill?
 No nobler labor in the battle-field?
 Or grant us beaten. While we gather might,
 Is there no comfort in the solemn wood?
 No cataracts whose angry roar shall smite
 Our hearts with courage? No eternal flood
 Of thoughts begotten by the eagle's flight?
 No God to strengthen us in solitude?"

The volume is very neatly printed, in the best
 style of works of its character, and does credit
 even to Mr. Hart, famous as he has become for
 elegant publications.

THE POETRY OF MRS. BROWNING.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE first of English female poets, living or dead, is Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Her handling of the language is masterly. Her imagination is pure and high. Her descriptions paint the scene so vividly that the reader actually seems to behold it. The affluence of her learning is such, that the most ordinary objects become transfigured by it, as in the "Paradise Lost" of Milton. Her skill as an artist is wonderful. Nor is she deficient in the more obvious qualities of the poet. Her perception of melody, though less fine than that of Tennyson, is unusually delicate. When the occasion demands it, she can melt with tenderness, glow with indignation, or prostrate herself in the fervor of religious adoration. She is eminently thoughtful. So masculine, indeed, is she in this particular, that some critics have considered her cold and statuesque. But it is the coldness, if coldness there is, of colossal strength. What Michael Angelo was among painters, that she is among the female poets. In proportion to the intellectual development of the reader, will be his or her pleasure in the perusal of Mrs. Browning. Praise like this may seem exaggerated to some. But a few of her best poems will show that we are justified in our commendation.

We open the volume at "Cowper's Grave." In this poem there is a depth of feeling, as profound as in the most passionate of Byron's. Yet, even in its heart-wrung tones, good taste is never offended, as is too often the case with the latter. She never sinks into bombast, all is real emotion. As a masterly exposition of Cowper's peculiar kind of insanity, the poem has a psychological value apart from its other merits. It offers as clear an elucidation of his condition as any, or all of the essays which have been multiplied upon the subject. It brings up before us the actual Cowper, tossing on his fevered bed in the harrowing visions of insanity, or haunted by the terror of coming madness, from which he seeks in vain to flee. The poem has the melancholy cadence of wind among the pines, in a hill-side grave-yard, as the winter night shuts in.

"It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying—
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying:
Yet let the grief and humbleness, as low as silence, languish!

Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

Oh, poets! from a maniac's tongue, was poured the deathless singing!
Oh, Christians! at your cross of hope, a hopeless hand was clinging!
Oh, men! this man in brotherhood, your weary paths beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling!

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming tears his story,
How discord on the music fell, and darkness on the glory,
And how, when one by one, sweet sounds and wandering lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face because so broken hearted;

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration:
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken;
Named softly, as the household name of one whom God hath taken.

With quiet sadness and no gloom, I learn to think upon him,
With meekness, that is gratefulness to God whose Heaven had won him—
Who suffered once the madness-cloud, to His own love to blind him;
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him;

And wrought within his shattered brain, such quick poetic senses,
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences!
The pulse of dew upon the grass, kept his within its number;
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home-caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tender-nesses:
The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways removing,
Its women and its men became beside him, true and loving.

But while, in blindness he remained unconscious of the guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,
He testified this solemn truth, though phrenzy desolated—
Nor man, nor Nature satisfy, whom only God created!

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses

And drops upon his burning brow, the coolness of her kisses;
That turns his fevered eyes around—"My mother! where's my mother?"—
As if such tender words and looks could come from any other!

The fever gone, with leaps of heart, he sees her bending o'er him;
Her face all pale from watchful love, the unwearied love she bore him!—
Thus, woke the poet from the dream, his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath these deep pathetic Eyes, which closed in death, to save him!

Thus? oh, not *thus*! no type of earth could image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round him breaking,
Or felt the now immortal throb of soul from body parted;
But felt those *eyes alone*, and knew "My Saviour! not deserted!"

Deserted! who hath dreamt that when the cross in darkness rested,
Upon the Victim's hidden face, no love was manifested?
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning drops averted,
What tears have washed them from the soul, that *one should be deserted*?

Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather:
And Adam's sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father;
Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry, his universe hath shaken—
It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"

It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,
That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation;
That earth's worst phrenzies, marring hope, should mar not hope's fruition,
And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture, in a vision!"

We pass next to "The Cry of the Children." This grand poem, which alternates from the blast of a trumpet to the hopeless cry of despair, has the factory and mining children of England for its theme. It is a passionate protest against the Mammon-worship of the age, or rather the systematic cruelties to which that worship leads. There is the instinct of true art, in Mrs. Browning's contrast between a spring morning in the fields, and the same morning as it appears to the weary children, imprisoned within the droning, stifling factory. We quote these portions.

"Do ye hear the children weeping, oh, my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers—
And that cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows:
The young birds are chirping in the nest;

The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the West—
But the young, young children, oh, my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!—
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap—
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping—
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal-dark underground—
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning—
Their wind comes in our faces—
Till our hearts turn—our heads, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places—
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling—
Turns the long light that droppeth down the wall—
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all!—
And all day the iron wheels are droning;
And sometimes we could pray,
"Oh, ye wheels," (breaking out in a mad moaning)—
'Stop! be silent for to-day!'"

The conclusion is mournful as the moan of the sea, on a starless night, when the tempest begins to mutter. It is interpenetrated also by a deep philosophy. Parts of it seem to be actually written with blood, wrung from the anguished hearts of children.

"And well may the children weep before you;
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun:
They know the grief of man, but not the wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm—
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom—
Are martyrs, by the pang without the pain—
Are worn as if with age, yet unretiringly
No dear remembrance keep—
Are orphans of the earthly love and Heavenly:
Let them weep! let them weep!
They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity;
'How long,' they say, 'how long, oh, cruel Nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitant,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, oh, our tyrants,
And your purple shows your path;
But the child's sob curseth deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath!'"

Those who deny to Mrs. Browning the "pathos of tears," who say she is cold and intellectual, should read her poem, "A Child Asleep." It is not, we know, as intensely emotional as Mrs. Norton's address to the children from whom she had been parted. But that too sad poem is

full of the aroma of a broken heart; a heart, which has been trodden upon, and crushed, and whose agony rises up to make the verse immortal; and God forbid that any other woman, from now to the end of Time, should become a poet by such a living martyrdom! Mrs. Browning's "A Child Asleep," does not rise to such a climax of agony. The subject, indeed, forbids it. Its sadness is more suggestive than real. Even when its allusions are of death, they come to us, like a sunset landscape in November, brimming through golden mist. We do not see the grave, we do not think of the confined face, but instead we hear angels in the air, and see, far off, celestial visions.

"How he sleepeth! having drunken
Weary childhood's mandragore,
From his pretty eyes have sunken
Pleasures, to make room for more—
Sleeping near the withered nosegay, which he pulled
the day before.

Nosegays! leave them for the waking:
Throw them earthward where they grow:
Dim are such beside the breaking
Amaranth he looks unto—
Folded eyes see brighter colors than the open ever
do.

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden
From the palms they sprang beneath
Now perhaps divinely holden,
Swing against him in a wreath—
We may think so from the quickening of his bloom
and of his breath.

Vision unto vision calleth,
While the young child dreameth on:
Fair, oh, dreamer, thou befall'st
With the glory thou hast won!
Darker wert thou in the garden, yesternorn, by
Summer sun.

We should see the spirits ringing
Round thee—were the clouds away
'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing
In the silent-seeming clay—
Singing?—Stars that seem the mute, go in music
all the way.

As the moths around a taper,
As the bees around a rose,
As the gnats around a vapor—
So the spirits group and close
Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its
repose.

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,
With their diadems of youth
On the ringlets which half screen thee
While thou smilest—not in sooth
Thy smile—but the overfair one, dropt from some
ethereal mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,
During slumber, shade by shade
To fine down this childish beauty,
To the thing it must be made,
Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb
shall see it fade.

Softly, softly! make no noises!
Now he lieth dead and dumb—
Now he hears the angels' voices

Folding silence in the room—
Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-
words as they come.

Speak not! he is consecrated—
Breathe no breath across his eyes:
Lifted up and separated
On the hand of God he lies,
In a sweetness beyond touching—held in cloistral
sanctities.

Could ye bless him—father—mother?
Bless the dimple in his cheek?
Dare ye look at one another,
And the benediction speak?
Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess
yourselves too weak?

He is harmless—ye are sinful—
Ye are troubled—he, at ease:
From his slumber, virtue winful
Floweth outward with increase—
Dare not bless him! but be blessed by his peace—
and go in peace."

"The Cry of the Human" is pervaded with a deep religious philosophy. We owe this noble strain to the Christian as much as to the woman or the poet. The very spirit of the gospels breathes in its every line. Never before, out of Holy Writ, has the lesson been more forcibly told, that, while in prosperity we forget our Maker, in adversity we fly to him. Alas! that it should be so true, that the lips which cry, "God be pitiful," rarely say, "God be praised." But to the poem.

"'There is no God,' the foolish saith—
But none, 'There is no sorrow;'
And Nature oft, the cry of faith,
In bitter need will borrow:
Eyes which the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raised;
And lips say, 'God be pitiful,'
Who ne'er said, 'God be praised.'"

Be pitiful, oh, God!

The tempest stretches from the steep
The shadow of its coming;
The beasts grow tame, and near us creep,
As help were in the human:
Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,
We spirits tremble under!—
The hills have echoes; but we find
No answer for the thunder.

Be pitiful, oh, God!

The battle hurtles on the plains—
Earth feels now scythes upon her:
We reap our brothers for the wains,
And call the harvest—honor—
Draw face to face, front line to line,
One image all inherit—
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,
Clay, clay—and spirit, spirit.

Be pitiful, oh, God!

The plague runs festering through the town—
And never a bell is tolling;
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling:
The young child calleth for the cup—
The strong man brings it weeping;
The mother from her babe looks up,
And shrieks away in sleeping.

Be pitiful, oh, God!

The plague of gold strikes far and near—
 And deep and strong it enters :
 This purple chimar which we wear,
 Makes madder than the centaurs.
 Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange;
 We cheer the pale gold-diggers—
 Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
 And marked, like sheep, with figures.
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

The curse of gold upon the land,
 The lack of bread enforces—
 The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,
 Like more of Death's White Horses !
 The rich preach 'rights' and future days,
 And hear no angel scoffing :
 The poor die mute—with starving gaze
 On corn-ships in the offing.
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

We meet together at the feast—
 To private mirth betake us—
 We stare down in the wine-cup, lest
 Some vacant chair should shake us !
 We name delight, and pledge it round—
 'It shall be ours to-morrow !'
 God's seraphs ! do your voices sound
 As sad in naming sorrow ?
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

We sit together, with the skies,
 The steadfast skies, above us :
 We look into each other's eyes—
 'And how long will you love us ?'
 The eyes grow dim with prophecy,
 The voices, low and breathless—
 'Till death us part !'—oh, words to be
 Our best for love the deathless !
 Be pitiful, dear God !

We tremble by the harmless bed
 Of one loved and departed—
 Our tears drop on the lips that said
 Last night, 'Be stronger hearted !'
 Oh, God—to clasp those fingers close,
 And yet to feel so lonely !—
 To see a light on dearest brows,
 Which is the daylight only !
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

The happy children come to us,
 And look up in our faces :
 They ask us—was it thus, and thus,
 When we were in their places ?
 We cannot speak :—we see anew
 The hills we used to live in ;
 And feel our mother's smile press through
 The kisses she is giving.
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

We pray together at the kirk,
 For mercy, mercy, solely—
 Hands weary with the evil work,
 We lift them to the Holy !
 The corpse is calm below our knee—
 Its spirit, bright before Thee—
 Between them, worse than either, we—
 Without the rest or glory !
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

We leave the communing of men,
 The murmur of the passions ;
 And live alone, to live again
 With endless generations.
 Are we so brave ? The sea and sky
 In silence lift their mirrors ;
 And, glassed therein, our spirits high
 Recoil from their own terrors.
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

We sit on hills our childhood wist,
 Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding :
 The sun strikes, through the farthest mist,
 The city's spire to golden.
 The city's golden spire it was,
 When hope and health were strongest,
 But now it is the church-yard grass,
 We look upon the longest.
 Be pitiful, oh, God !

And soon all vision waxeth dull—
 Men whisper, 'He is dying :'
 We cry no more, 'Be pitiful !'
 We have no strength for crying :
 No strength, no need ! Then, Soul of mine,
 Look up and triumph rather—
 Lo ! in the depth of God's Divine,
 The Son adjures the Father—
 BE PITIFUL, oh, God !"

We have alluded to the descriptive power of Mrs. Browning. In one of her longer poems, the "Rhyme of the Duchess May," there is a scene, in which a horse and rider leaps from a castle wall ; and so graphically is it delineated, that we hear the very snorting of the steed, and see his affrighted, blood-shot eye, as he is spurred to his death. The story of the poem is this. The Duchess May, a heroine of old feudal times, is sought by her guardian's son, but loves another, with whom she finally elopes. The rejected suitor, with the grim baron, his father, gives pursuit, but being too late to prevent the marriage, sits down to beleaguer the successful rival in his castle. Cooped up, week after week, in the narrow walls, the garrison at last begins to suffer from famine. Moved by the sight of innocent women and babes, the wives and children of his retainers, dying before his eyes, the husband resolves to sacrifice himself, in order to save their lives : and accordingly directs the steed, on which he had borne off the Duchess May, to be led up to the highest tower, intending to leap, with him, down below. The young wife, praying in her closet, hears the noise of the hoofs, and going out, learns, from the unwilling groom, her lord's intention. The tale is rehearsed, while a chapel bell is tolling, and the "toll slowly," coming in between the narrator's words, fore-shadows, from the first, the tragedy.

"Low she dropt her head, and lower, till her hair
 coiled on the floor— *Toll slowly.*
 And tear after tear you heard, fall distinct as any
 word
 Which you might be listening for.

'Get thee in, thou soft ladie !—here is never a place
 for thee ! *Toll slowly.*
 Braid thy hair and clasp thy gown, that thy beauty
 in its moan
 May find grace with Leigh of Leigh.'

She stood up in bitter case, with a pale yet steady
 face— *Toll slowly.*
 Like a statue thunderstruck, which, though quivering,
 seems to look
 Right against the thunder-place."

And she does not go in. She takes the rein herself, and leads the horse up the stair, the sagacious steed following, "meek as a hound." Attaining the battlement, her husband, who suspects her purpose, beseeches her to return; but she will not. Meekly, she says, she has done all his biddings; but this she cannot. If *he* dies, *she* will die. He leaps into "the selle," or saddle, to escape from her; but she clings to his knee. She had ridden with him, she declares, as a happy, triumphant bride, when he came through the castle gate; and she will ride with him now, when he leaps from the castle wall. The crisis of the siege arrives, while he is still pleading; and she still refusing, with the heroic abnegation of a true woman.

"Ho! the breach yawns into ruin, and roars up against her suing—*Toll slowly.*
With the inarticulate din, and the dreadful falling in—
Shrieks of doing and undoing!

Twice he wrung her hands in twain; but the small hands closed again—*Toll slowly.*
Back he reined the steed—back, back! but she trailed along his track,
With a frantic clasp and strain!

Evermore the foeman pour through the crash of window and door—*Toll slowly.*
And the shouts of Leigh and Leigh, and the shrieks of 'kill!' and 'flee!'
Strike up clear the general roar.

Thrice he wrung her hands in twain—but they closed and clung again—*Toll slowly.*
Wild she clung, as one, withstood, clasps a Christ upon the rood,
In a spasm of deathly pain.

She clung wild and she clung mute—with her shuddering lips half-shut—*Toll slowly.*
Her head fallen as in sound—hair and knee swept on the ground—
She clung wild to stirrup and foot.

Back he reined his steed, back-thrown on the slippery coping stone—*Toll slowly.*
Back the iron hoofs did grind, on the battlement behind,
Whence a hundred feet went down.

And his heel did press and goad on the quivering flank bestrode,
Toll slowly.
'Friends, and brothers! save my wife! Pardon, sweet, in change for life—*Toll slowly.*
But I ride alone to God!'

Straight as if the Holy name did upbreathe her as a flame—*Toll slowly.*
She upsprang, she rose upright!—in his selle she sat in sight;
By her love she overcame.

And her head was on his breast, where she smiled as one at rest—*Toll slowly.*
'Ring,' she cried, 'oh, vesper-bell, in the beech-wood's old chapelle!
But the passing bell rings best.'

They have caught out at the rein, which Sir Guy threw loose—in vain—*Toll slowly.*

For the horse in stark despair, with his front hoofs poised in air,
On the last verge, rears amain.

And he hangs, he rocks between—and his nostrils curdle in—*Toll slowly.*
And he shivers head and hoof—and the flakes of foam fall off;
And his face grows fierce and thin!

And a look of human woe, from his staring eyes did go—*Toll slowly.*
And a sharp cry uttered he, in a foretold agony
Of the headlong death below—

And, 'Ring, ring—thou passing-bell,' still she cried, 'i' the old chapelle!'*Toll slowly.*
Then back toppling, crashing back—a dead weight flung out to wrack,
Horse and riders overfell!"

Kents' "Ode To A Grecian Urn" has more of the true antique feeling, than any other, perhaps, in the English language. If there is a poem that rivals it, it is "The Dead Pan" of Mrs. Browning. This poem is founded on a tradition, mentioned in Plutarch, that, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of "Great Pan is Dead," swept across the waters in hearing of certain mariners, and simultaneously the Pagan oracles ceased, and were dumb forever after, while all their divinities perished. In a strain of high-wrought eloquence, mingled with irony, the poet invokes the gods of Greece; and such a gallery of classic portraits is to be found nowhere else in English verse. What grand scorn in the description of Jupiter's Eagle, old and blind and desolate, and shivering in the cold! What sensuous beauty in proud Juno on her golden bed! What a picture is that of the dead Venus, lying with the dead Loves huddled about her, "frore as taken in a snow-storm!" We have not space for the entire poem, but quote its opening stanzas.

"Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan is dead.

In what revels are ye sunken,
In old Ethiopia?
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora,
Your divine pale lips that shiver,
Like the lotus in the river?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number
Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine—
And so kept alive and fine?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Or ile crushed your stagnant corpses,
Where the silver spheres roll on,

Stung to life by centric forces
Thrown like rays out from the sun?—
While the smoke of your old altars
Is the shroud that round you welters?
Great Pan is dead.

* * * * *

Jove, that right hand is unloaded,
Whence the thunder did prevail;
While in idiocy of godhead,
Thou art staring the stars pale!
And thine eagle, blind and old,
Roughs his feathers in the cold.
Pan, Pan is dead.

Where, oh, Juno, is the glory
Of thy regal look and tread!
Will they lay, for evermore, thee,
On thy dim, straight golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Ha, Apollo! Flouts his golden
Hair, all mist-like where he stands;
While the Muses hang enfolding
Knee and foot with faint wild hands?
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,
Niobe looked lost as thou!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Shall the casque with its brown iron,
Pallas' broad blue eyes, eclipse—
And no hero take inspiring
From the God-Greek of her lips?
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,
Mars the mighty, cursing it?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther
He swoons—bound with his own vines!
And his Mænads slowly saunter,
Head aside, among the pines,
While they murmur dreamingly—

'Evohe—ah—evohe—!'
Ah, Pan is dead.

Neptune lies beside the trident,
Dull and senseless as a stone:
And old Pluto deaf and silent
Is cast out into the sun.
Ceres smileth stern therout—
'We all now are desolate—'
Now Pan is dead.

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam, thou art,
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thy heart!
Ai Adonia! At that shriek,
Not a tear runs down her cheek—
Pan, Pan is dead.

And the Loves we used to know from
One another—huddled lie,
Frero as taken in a snow-storm,
Close beside her tenderly—
As if each had weakly tried
Once to kiss her as he died.
Pan, Pan is dead."

Mrs. Browning is not without faults. The metres she sometimes uses are so artificial that the reader's attention is distracted from the thought. Her rhymes are frequently so far-fetched as to produce a similar result. She sometimes forgets the poet in the dialectician. She is, perhaps, too uniformly sad. But, nevertheless, her superiority cannot be disputed over other female poets in the language. Her "Casa Guidi Windows," alone, would render her immortal. We regret that our space does not allow us, at present, to consider that grand poem. But it deserves a paper by itself.

THE POETRY OF READ.*

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE publication of an elegantly illustrated volume suggests to us to consider Mr. Read as a poet. It is for grace, melody, keen sympathies, knowledge of nature, and delicate appreciation of the beautiful, that he generally receives credit. We think he might aim at a higher walk, with fair prospects of success, if he would but "gird up his loins for the battle;" and that this is his own opinion, we judge from an entirely new work, "The House by the Sea," in which he makes the attempt. Before we have finished, it will be seen how far, in our opinion, he has succeeded. Having made the venture, it is incumbent on him to go on, for to fail, if the latent capacity lies within him to triumph, would now be dishonor.

"The House by the Sea," is a wild, weird story, full of forcible descriptive passages, and characterized by unusual license both as to incidents and to style. The poet has plainly given free scope in it to his genius, determined to test his capacity to the utmost, as well in regard to positive strength as to originality and self-reliance. The chief actors are a solitary exile, inhabiting a lonely house that beetles over the sea; and a fisherman's daughter, Agatha, one of those incarnations of innocence and piety, whom poets love to delineate. The exile, in earlier life, has been the victim of a great sorrow. Fate has separated him from his mistress; she has perished by suicide; and he has fled, in gloomy despair, to this secret haunt. One night, in the midst of a terrible storm, a ship is cast away near his dwelling. Two persons only are rescued, Ida, his lost mistress, and her confessor. That is, they wear the likeness of these, but are really evil spirits: and their mission is to tear Roland from the young girl, by reviving his old affection. For awhile their scheme promises to succeed. They induce the exile to embark, on the ensuing day, on board their vessel, itself a dragon-fiend. But Agatha, at this crisis of Roland's fate, and when the plot against his soul appears about to triumph, becomes the instrument of his rescue.

The poem concludes with the flight of the baffled demons; the union of the two lovers: and the restoration of Roland to happiness and usefulness, under the sweet guidance of Agatha.

To arrive at a just estimate of "The House by the Sea," its element of *diablerie* must be continually borne in mind, otherwise some of the finest passages will lose much of their force and significance. For example, when the shipwrecked lady is carried to Roland's hearth, accompanied by the monk, the knowledge that she and her confessor are not what they seem, gives additional meaning to the verse; for that, which else would be only a graphic delineation of a tempest, rises to a revelation that demoniac attendants are abroad, that they crowd about the house, that they rush in as the door opens.

"Was it the sound of a human cry,
Or wail of a night-bird driven by?
The lady started and halfway rose,
With that look the walking sleeper shows—
With large eyes staring vacantly,
That seem to listen and not to see."

"Even while she spoke, as if at her will,
The door swung wide and over the sill
The gust and the roar and the spray swept in."

"And the old monk murmured—'My blessing is thine.'

While he laid his hand on her shining hair;
But it seemed like a fiery gauntlet there!

Then tracing his girdle and fumbling his dress,
He cried with a visage of deep distress,
'Oh, wo is me! They are lost in the sea—
That miracle cross and rosary!
Torn from my side in these desperate shocks
When the billows were lifting me over the rocks.

Oh, wo is me! They were made from a tree
In the garden of holy Geth—'

Here the sea,
Through the open door, hurled into the place
Such a cloud of spray that the old man's face
Was smothered with brine. The white torch hissed,
And all the room was blind with the mist."

The skill with which, throughout the poem, the demoniac element is brought out, through this principle of association, proves Mr. Read a natural artist in poetry. In the description of the dragon-barque, we feel that it is a sentient thing we are reading of, a fiend-ship and not mere timbers. The sneering monk is as ably delineated. His first appearance is a picture, complete, and needing no accessories.

* Poems by Thomas Buchanan Read. Illustrated edition. 1 vol. Philada: Parry & McMillan. 1855.

The House by the Sea. A Poem. By Thomas Buchanan Read. 1 vol. Philada: Parry & McMillan. 1856.

"There came the monk in his robe of brown,
O'er his breast his white beard blown
And sparkling like a gust of foam;
As if old Neptune should leave his home,
To travel the dry land up and down
Disguised in a friar's hood and gown."

But it is when he describes modern Rome, and especially when he falls on his knees to pray, that we detect his counterfeit.

"The monk fell in the pathway prone,
And lay, like a statue overthrown;
Muttering harshly to the air
Something that passed for a hurried prayer.

And when the bell was done, he rose
Red in the face as a furnace glows—
And cried, 'Now, hang that sacristan!
What pious crank has got into the man,
Thus to be ringing a vesper tune
In the very middle of afternoon?
It takes one down so unawares
That one can scarcely remember his prayers!
And besides, we have an old tradition,
Which may be merely superstition,
That when one kneels and forgets his prayer,
The Devil is also kneeling there!'"

The accumulation of similes, metaphors, and other analogies, all associated with demoniacal ideas, in the scene after the embarkation, is another evidence of his skill. So adroitly has the poet managed it, that the very air seems to glow, a terrible light gleams around, and the songs that are sung have an undertone of horrible mockery. Unquestionably this is one of the finest parts of the poem. We quote the description of the lady's musical instruments and of her music, as proof of this.

"And it looked as it had only been
Waked to *mysterious melodies*,
On phantom lakes and enchanted seas,
Flashing to fingers weird and wan,
In the minstrel ages lost and gone."

Round and round the cadence flew,
Sailing aloft and dropping low,
Now soaring with the wild sea-mew,
Flushing its breast in the sunset glow,
Then slowly dropping down the air,
Wailing with a wild despair,
Down and down,
Till it seemed to drown,
With wide pinions on the brine,
Weltering with no living sign,
Till the listener's pitying eye
Wept that so fair a thing should die.
Then with malicious laughter loud
Jeering the sighing hearer's grief,
In a moment wild and brief,
Filling the air with mockery,
It leapt to the sky and pierced the cloud."

Rowland listened, confused, amazed,
While an unknown frenzy thrilled his heart;
And Agatha on the lady gazed
With steadfast eyes and lips apart;
And there sat the friar smoothing his beard,
As into the maiden's eyes he peered
With a sidelong sinister glance;
While she, as one in a charmed trance

Bending forward, could only see
Roland leaning on the lady's knee,
With pale, bewildered countenance,
Gazing up in her face, which beamed
As if a torchlight on it gleamed;
And flushed as with an orient wine.
Where passion's swift and fitful flame
On the breath of music went and came
Like a gusty blaze on a heathen shrine."

The description of the flight of the baffled fiends, after their prey has escaped, is in a similar strain. In all these passages, the poet towers and towers, till he reaches a height whence he swoops downward with resistless force.

"The lady standing beyond the door,
Like one whose despair can bear no more,
Shrieked a fiendish shriek of wrath;
And, with a hollow sepulchral sound,
Her body fell upon the ground
And lay a corpse along the path!"

And then a shadow, like a cloud
On a hissing whirlwind fierce and loud,
Swept seaward, pierced with curses and shrieks,
Which like the lightning's fiery streaks
Flashed madly through the twilight shades,
Cleaving the air with sulphurous blades!

Then the people ran to the headland height
With the fascination of wonder and fright—
And saw the little dragon-bark,
Speeding out to the eastern dark—
Away and away, as swift and bright
As a red flamingo's sudden flight.

And climbing the black rocks higher and higher
They gazed and gazed with aching sight—
Till into the distant realm of night
They saw it pass—a ship on fire!"

Those who have thought Mr. Read capable only of graceful and tender lyrics will be struck, we think, with the force here displayed. In an earlier portion of the poem, however, occurs a passage of even greater power than any of these: it is a description of the suicide's hell.

"Then I saw that by the horrible deed
The chain was sundered, yet I was not freed;
I had burst away from a windowed cell
Into a dungeon unfathomable—
Into utter night—where I could only hear
The sighing of cold phantoms near!
I shrank with dread; but soon I knew
They also shrank with dread from me;
And presently I began to see
Thin shapes of such a ghastly hue
That sudden agues thrilled me through!"

'Some bore in their hands, as signs of guilt,
Keen poinards crimson to the hilt,'
Which, ever and anon, in wild despair
They struck into their breasts of air:
Some pressed to their pale lips empty vials
Till frenzied with their fruitless trials:
Some with their faces to the sky,
Walked ever searching for a beam:
Some leaped from shadowy turrets high,
And fell, as in a nightmare dream,
Halfway, and stopped, as some mad rill,
That leaps from the top of an alpine hill,
Ere it reaches the rocks it hoped to win,
Is borne away in a vapor thin;

Some plunged them into counterfeit pools—
 Into water that neither drowns nor cools
 The horrible fever that burns the brain,
 Then climbed despairing to plunge again:
 And there were lovers together clasped,
 O'er fumeless brazeros, who sighed and gasped,
 Staring wonder in each other's eye,
 And tantalized that they did not die.

'Then as I passed, with marvelling stare
 They gazed, forgetting their own despair.
 Oh, horrible! their eyes did gloat
 Upon me, till at my ashen throat
 I felt the fiery viper thrust
 Which ever in that dry air is nurst.
 And ere I was aware
 I had raised the cup it was mine to bear:
 My pale lips cleaved to the goblet dim,
 And found but dust on the heated rim.'

As a necessary relief to these terrible verses, where horror is accumulated on horror till the blood runs chill, we give the climax of joy and rejoicing with which the poem may be said to conclude. Escaped from the dragon-barque, with Agatha fainting in his arms, Roland gains a church near the sea, the lady and the monk following in pursuit, until checked by the sacred threshold. While the disguised fiends stand gnashing their teeth without, the hero bears the insensible form to the foot of the altar, and kissing her, adjures the sweet girl to awake. The caress revives her. We leave the poet to tell the rest.

"A moment surveying the sacred place,
 Her blue eyes turned, then with modest grace
 Gazing up into Roland's face,
 Her sweet tongue said, in its first release,
 With words which seemed breathed from the lips of peace—

"The spell is past! Oh, hour divine!
 Thou, thou art mine! and I am thine!"

And the listening shadows cool and grey,
 In the gallery, like a responding choir,
 Where the organ glowed like an altar-fire,
 Seemed to the echoing vault to say,
 Softly as at a nuptial shrine—
 'Thou art mine! and I am thine!
 And still through the breathless moments after,
 Like doves beneath the sheltering rafter,
 Along the roof in faint decline,
 The echoes whispered with voices fine—
 'Mine and thine! mine and thine!'

And now, like a golden trumpet, blown
 To make a glorious victory known,
 The organ with its roll divine,
 Poured abroad from its thrilling tongue
 Words the sweetest ever sung—
 'Mine and thine! mine and thine!'

And up in the tower the iron bell
 Suddenly felt the joyous spell,
 And flung its accents clear and gay,
 As if it were rung on a wedding-day;
 And like a singer swaying his head
 To mark the time
 Of some happy rhyme,
 Breathing his heart in every line,
 Thus swayed the bell, and swaying said—
 'Mine and thine! mine and thine!'"

Many passages of almost equal beauty, though less sustained, are scattered through the poem. A few random selections are all we can give.

"Out of the East the moon arose
 Red as Mont Blanc at morning glows;
 Over the sea, like a ship on fire,
 She sailed with her one star sailing by her."

"Far and wide through the valley round
 Sailed the silver wings of sound—
 Like a flock of doves rung out,
 Wheeling joyfully about,
 Flashing from their pinions white
 A sense of quiet and delight."

"The sea, to one of its slumberous calms,
 Now sunk as it never would waken more:
 Its breakers were only as flocks of lambs
 Bleating and gambolling along the shore.
 Where of late the storm-lion insane
 Had shaken abroad his tumultuous mane,
 Frightening the land with his rage and his roar."

The defect of the poem is an occasional carelessness, sometimes in thought, and sometimes in the execution. In the following otherwise fine passage, not only is the pathway of the stars compared to the track of a snail, a sad descent, but the grandeur of the whole is still further weakened, at what ought to be the culminating point, by the figure in the two closing lines.

"This very moment we hold a place
 Never filled before in space—
 Where never again the world shall reel—
 The same wave never revisits the wheel.

Year by year our course is run
 In a voyage around the sun;
 In million circlings forth and back
 We never retrace a once gone track.
 Did the countless earths abroad, like snails,
 Leave behind them shining trails,
 What a web of strange design
 Through the eternal space would shine!
 And such a web of marvellous lines
 Left by each satellite and sun,
 Though by us unseen, still clearly shines
 To the observant eye of One.

And did the countless souls of men
 Leave life-trails visible to the ken,
 Each hued with color to betray
 The character which passed that way,
 How intricate and variously hued
 Would seem the woof of pathways rude
 Across the world's great surface laid!
 And so inwoven with lines of shade,
 Of vice and cruelty, anger and hate,
 That darkness would preponderate!
 And such a woof of tangled trails
 Lies o'er the world and never paies—
 Never varies. On earth's great page
 Each soul records its pilgrimage,
 And under the eye of God each shines
 As visible in eternal lines,
 As on the cliff I see from here
 The various strata lines appear."

Is not the solution to this error to be found in the essentially synthetical character of Read's mind? If we have correctly studied his intellect, as revealed in his poems, it is deficient in analysis. Poe, for example, wrote poetry as a

mason builds a house. He raised up the fabric of a poem, thought by thought, metaphor by metaphor, line by line, fitting, rejecting, trimming and squaring, exactly like a brick-layer erecting a wall. Why? Because his genius was altogether analytical, so that it was impossible for him to construct a poem, except by first dissecting the works of the great masters, discovering the secrets they employed, and then laboriously selecting and arranging his materials. In saying this we do not speak speculatively, for circumstances threw us, for years, into daily literary companionship with Poe, so that the processes of his mind became perfectly familiar to us. Synthetical intellects work in a different way. They possess a power of assimilating to themselves, instinctively, the ideas that are in harmony with what they wish to write about. Or rather they become *en rapport*, unconsciously, with analogies and associations bearing on their subject. They usually write their best things with freedom and even rapidity; and unused to analyze, call this inspiration. It was, in such a mood, that Burns wrote his "Highland Mary." He went out, at twilight, Mrs. Burns said; she heard him walking up and down, watching the evening star and crooning; and directly he came in and wrote down the song. Doubtless the burden of that exquisite lyric had been on his mind for years. The rough ore had gradually been forming, deep in the recesses of his heart, till at last, fused by some accidental lightning stroke, it rushed forth, at white heat, and was moulded forever.

The difference between the analytical and synthetical mind, therefore, is this, that the one has to gather up laboriously what it needs, while the other is all the while unconsciously assimilating. But the latter often is so deficient in analysis, that it cannot tell, after what it calls its period of inspiration is over, how to amend an error, or even sometimes that there is an error. And yet the synthetical mind, whose mission is to construct, is superior to the analytical, whose impulse is to destroy. All the great masters, whether in poetry, philosophy, or statesmanship, have been synthetical. In the very greatest, indeed, the two faculties have been equally developed, as in Bacon, Newton, Shakspeare, and others. But when an intellect, essentially analytical, attempts to be synthetical, it only succeeds by a procession of inversion. Poe had one of the subtlest analytical intellects. He was of his kind as great as Milton. Yet his best works are immeasurably beneath those of the latter. They have all that is requisite except the divine element. They are not flesh and

blood. What the Frankenstein was to other men they are to other poetry.

On the contrary, whatever a synthetical mind produces is at least homogeneous. It does not weld, but fuses together. It does not fabricate, it creates. Its work is not mere mechanism, but a living organic body. The popular intellect recognizes this, though employing a vague term to express its meaning, when it says that Poe and other merely analytical poets have no heart; that one sees in their verse only the polish and glitter of cold steel; that though they may awaken admiration, they never touch the soul. But the poetry of synthetical minds is always vital. It may be redundant, like that of Kents, and need pruning; it may spring from a comparatively barren soil, as with third-rate writers, and be deficient in strength; but it is real, living poetry, and the people recognize it as such. And this brings us back to the prevailing error of synthetical minds, their proclivity to write without correction, and its cause, a deficiency in the faculty of analysis. But, fortunately for them, this faculty may be developed, if not absolutely created, by intellectual discipline. Its growth may be clearly traced in Shakspeare. It is but slightly visible in his earlier poems; it exhibits its traces more plainly in those written in mid-career; and it culminates so grandly in his later ones, that the subtlety of the metaphysician makes us almost forget the imagination of the poet. So also with Milton. How different are *Comus* and *Paradise Lost*! Yet the creative force exhibited in the first is not inferior to that displayed in the last. The epic is greater than the masque, just to that degree to which Milton had developed his powers of analysis, by study, by controversy, by psychological inquiries, by close thought of every kind. Had he never been Cromwell's secretary, had he never crushed Salmatius, he would never have written this masterpiece, which no subsequent poet has been able to rival, no critic able to point out how it might be improved.

We have dwelt the longer upon this distinction between the analytical and synthetical faculties, because it solves the question, so often asked, yet so rarely answered, "how shall we tell who is, or who is not, a true poet?" For an essentially analytical mind is never creative, but only adaptive, and cannot, under any circumstances, become a real poet. It may become a subtle critic, a keen metaphysician, or an accurate investigator of the laws of Nature, but never a poet, or creator, in any correct sense of that term. It may even write verses, and verses, which may temporarily acquire fame, in consequence of

embodying the taste of their generation, but they will never survive through the ages, revered and worshipped by the great popular heart, as are the grand old bards of Palestine and Greece. The analytical mind may also write novels, and wonderful ones too, after the school of Godwin, in which the workings of the human heart will be anatomized so thoroughly that we can see the quiver of every fibre. But it will never produce such works as *Ivanhoe*, or even *Master Humphrey's Clock*. It is the stuff out of which to make men of science, not the golden ore from which true poetry is minted. And yet, in this age, more perhaps than in most others, the ranks of poetry, so-called, swarm with analytical intellects. The press teems with pretty bits of mosaic, arranged with rare skill, polished to the highest degree of perfection, and modelled according to rules of art as infallible as those in *Blair's Rhetoric*; and the analytical minds who read these counterfeits—for ninety-nine hundredths of our educated minds are simply analytical, and not at all creative—cry out "what a master-piece." Alas! analysis may prune, but cannot give life.

But to return to Read. Our young countryman, with his essentially synthetical mind, has the true foundation on which to build. For

short lyrics he has already grasp enough. His "Bards," his "City of the Heart," "The Closing Scene," and other poems we might quote, are nearly, if not quite, perfect of their kind. Passages of great beauty may be selected also from his longer poems, as we have shown. But Read trusts too much to inspiration, too little to revision. He needs discipline of intellect, so as to bring out the analytical faculty, and enable him to criticise, and correct, and condense. He dreams too much, lives too entirely in vague fancies, is not a sufficiently exact and laborious investigator of his own mind and the laws of poetry. In a primitive era, such "sweet singers" may succeed. But no poet of this description has ever risen, or can rise, to the highest eminence in a cultivated age. We have several young poets, in America, who have done what holds forth an almost sure promise of immortality, if to their natural synthetical genius they would only add severe training. Of these Read is one. In "The House by the Sea," he has exhibited great inventive powers, has given high promise for the future, has shown a sustained capacity for which even his best friends were scarcely prepared. We look to him, however, for yet greater things. And earnestly we bid him "God speed."

THE SONG-WRITERS OF AMERICA.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

POETRY is the daughter of the gods. The divinest faculty of man is the gift of song. If there is anything that links us to the angels, it is our longing for supernal beauty—a longing which we seek to gratify in painting, in music, in earthly loveliness, but most of all in poetry. To the eye of the poet the commonest things of life have a beauty greater than the most beautiful things of earth to the eye of the uninspired. There is not a leaf that rustles in the wood, nor a wave that sparkles in the sun, nor a bird that sings in the thicket, nor a flower that lifts its face to the summer sky and smiles, but is lovelier to the poet than the most splendid pageant to the mere "hewer of wood and drawer of water" of earth. A ripple, a dew-drop, the tinkle of a waterfall, the shout of a child at play in the woods, the first star that glitters at evening, a wild pigeon on the wing, these, and ten thousand other things stir innumerable chords in the soul of the poet, wake visions of supernal beauty, and brace him for the ills and turmoil of life. Milton, blind and poor, was happier, we doubt not, than Charles upon his throne.

But poetry, not only sheds its effulgence over the poet's soul, it glorifies life for those who read it in all ages afterward. Achilles has been dead three thousand years, and the beauty of Briseis has mouldered into dust; but we still hear him lamenting, by the "ever-sounding sea," for his lost and lovely captive. The shriek of Laocoon, as the serpent crunched his little ones, still rings in our ears, though Ilium has been a ruin for centuries, though the language of Virgil is dead. Beatrice smiles, up in heaven, for us, as she smiled, saint-like, for Dante. The vision of Eve, as she rose, in matchless grace and beauty, before the mental sight of Milton, is a heritage for all time. With Rosalind we have roamed in the forest of Ardenne. We have seen the spotless Imogen asleep: "'tis her breath perfumes the chamber." We have been spectators of Richard's midnight terrors; have heard Lady Macbeth's "out, out damned spot;" have soared with Ariel to the skies; have wept over the dead Cordelia.

The song-writer, though he gives us no such visions as these, is as much of a poet as the

composer of an epic. His department is a different one, but in that department he may display equal genius. The true song is music and poetry melted into one. It appeals, unlike the epic, to two distinct elements of our nature. There are hundreds of poems, which their authors call songs, that have no title, critically speaking, to the name. A lyric, to be perfect, should have but one main thought; should go at once to the theme; should be clothed in language alike terse and polished; and should burn with passion, or melt with tenderness, as the subject demands. America, young as she is, can boast many true lyrics. At the risk of being considered invidious, we shall proceed to verify this assertion, by selecting a few out of the hundreds published.

Foremost, both on account of its merit and the period at which it was written, we quote an exquisite song by Dr. Shaw. This gentleman died in 1809, and the song that follows was written many years before. It has touches in it that equal Shakspeare, and is, perhaps, surpassed by few lyrics of the kind in the language.

SONG.

"Who has robb'd the ocean cave,
To tinge thy lips with coral hue?
Who from India's distant wave,
For thee, those pearly treasures drew?
Who, from yonder orient sky,
Stole the morning of thine eye?

Thousand charms, thy form to deck,
From sea, and earth, and air are torn;
Roses bloom upon thy cheek,
On thy breath their fragrance borne.
Guard thy bosom from the day,
Lest thy snows should melt away.

But one charm remains behind,
Which mute earth can ne'er impart;
Nor in ocean wilt thou find,
Nor in the circling air a heart:
Fairest, wouldst thou perfect be,
Take, oh, take that heart from me."

But the best of our song-writers, perhaps, is Pinckney. He had that combined simplicity and finish—that rare union of the two highest merits of a song—which distinguishes the old masters. Here is one of his shorter lyrics.

SONG.

"We break the glass, whose sacred wine,
To some beloved health we drain.
Lest future pledges, less divine,
Should e'er the hallow'd toy profane;

And thus I broke a heart that pour'd
Its tide of feelings out for thee,
In draughts, by after-times deplored,
Yet dear to memory.

But still the old, impassion'd ways
And habits of the mind remain,
And still unhappy light displays
Thine image chamber'd in my brain,
And still it looks as when the hours
Went by like flights of singing birds,
Or that soft chain of spoken flowers,
And airy gems—thy words."

And here is another. With what easy grace
he rhapsodizes!

SERENADE.

"Look out upon the stars, my love,
And shame them with thine eyes,
On which, than on the lights above,
There hang more destinies.
Night's beauty is the harmony
Of blending shades and light;
Then, lady, up—look out, and be
A sister to the night!"

Sleep not!—thine image wakes for aye
Within my watching breast:
Sleep not!—from her soft sleep should fly,
Who robs all hearts of rest.
Nay, lady, from thy slumbers break,
And make this darkness gay
With looks, whose brightness well might make
Of darker nights a day."

Charles Fenno Hoffman was popular in his day. He differs from Pinkney in not having the *ars celare artem*. The songs of the first, though often ornate in details, have, in general, a chaste and severe simplicity. In Hoffman's songs there is no such thing as simplicity. They are all "sparkling and bright" as the wine he loves to commemorate, or the bright eyes it is his delight to extol. He resembles Tom Moore too much. His best lyric is the following.

SPARKLING AND BRIGHT.

"Sparkling and bright in liquid light
Does the wine our goblets gleam in,
With hue as red as the rosy bed
Which a bee would choose to dream in.
Then fill to-night with hearts as light,
To loves as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim,
And break on the lips while meeting.

Oh! if Mirth might arrest the flight
Of Time through Life's dominions,
We here awhile would now beguile
The greybeard of his pinions,
To drink to-night with hearts as light,
To loves as gay and fleeting
As bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim,
And break on the lips while meeting.

But since delight can't tempt the wight,
Nor fond regret delay him,
Nor Love himself can hold the elf,
Nor sober Friendship stay him,
We'll drink to-night with hearts as light,
To loves as gay and fleeting,
As bubbles that swim on the beaker's brim,
And break on the lips while meeting."

P. Pendleton Coke has written several exquisite lyrics, of which one, at least, is almost without a rival. It has haunted us for years. Often, as twilight draws on, we find ourself unconsciously "crooning" it.

FLORENCE VANE.

"I loved thee long and dearly,
Florence Vane;
My life's bright dream and early
Hath come again;
I renew, in my fond vision,
My heart's dear pain,
My hopes and thy derision,
Florence Vane.

The ruin, lone and hoary,
The ruin old
Where thou didst hark my story,
At even told—
That spot—the hues Elysian
Of sky and plain—
I treasure in my vision,
Florence Vane.

Thou wast lovelier than the roses
In their prime;
Thy voice excell'd the closes
Of sweetest rhyme;
Thy heart was as a river
Without a main,
Would I had loved thee never,
Florence Vane!

But, fairest, coldest, wonder!
Thy glorious clay
Lieth the green sod under—
Alas, the day!
And it boots not to remember
Thy disdain—
To quicken love's pale ember,
Florence Vane.
The lilies of the valley
By young graves weep
The daisies love to dally
Where maidens sleep;
May their bloom, in beauty vying,
Never wane
Where thine earthly part is lying,
Florence Vane!"

Of a homelier type is Woodworth's "Bucket." This song is known from Louisiana to Maine, and will live long after more pretentious ones are forgotten. A lyric, which can thus penetrate to the hearts of the masses is one of high merit in its way, although it may be deficient in that exquisite finish a highly cultivated mind desires.

THE BUCKET.

"How dear to this heart are the scenes of my childhood!
When fond recollection presents them to view;
The orchard, the meadow, the deep tangled wild wood,
And every loved spot which my infancy knew;
The wide-spreading pond, and the mill which stood by it,
The bridge, and the rock where the cataract fell;
The cot of my father, the dairy-house nigh it,
And o'en the rude bucket which hung in the well.

The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket which hung in the well.

That moss-cover'd vessel I hail as a treasure,
For often at noon, when return'd from the field,
I found it the source of an exquisite pleasure,
The purest and sweetest that Nature can yield.
How ardent I seized it with hands that were glowing,
How quick to the white pebbled bottom it fell,
Then soon with the emblem of truth overflowing,
And dripping with coolness, it rose from the well.
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-cover'd bucket arose from the well.

How sweet from the green mossy brim to receive it,
As, poised on the curb, it inclined to my lips;
Not a full blushing goblet could tempt me to leave it,
Though fill'd with the nectar that Jupiter sips.

And now, far removed from the love's situation,
The tear of regret will intrusively swell,
As fancy reverts to my father's plantation,
And sighs for the bucket which hung in the well.
The old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket,
The moss-cover'd bucket which hangs in his well."

We might quote others of the "Songs of America." But we forbear. Our space is out. In what we have given, we have sought to represent, so to speak, different schools. To quote specimens even of all the really good lyrists of our country would demand more room than we can afford, just now.